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ABSTRACT

This document consists of three year's worth (18 consecutive issues), 1995-1998, of the periodical "Hands-on English." This serial publication is intended for teachers and tutors of adult English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL). Each issue contains editorials, letters to the editor, teaching and learning activities, teaching tips, instructional tools and techniques, crossword puzzles, and news and notes. The articles and ideas are contributed by experienced teachers and tutors, including readers of the publication. (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education) (JL)

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Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

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Anna Sillman

1

FL 801 235

Volume V, Number 1 May/June 1995

Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

Contents

Letters . . . . . page 3

Pronunciation: Make your own tongue twisters . . . . . page 4

Tools & techniques: Dialog doings . . . . . page 5

Crossword puzzle: Sorry! About apologizing. . . . . page 6

From the field: A Multicultural Fair . . . . . page 8

"Coming in Cold" . . . . . page 12

News & notes . . . . . page 10

On the market: Review of "English for Success" . . . . . page 11

Index: Index to Vol. IV . . . . . page 13

Hints & tips: . . . . . page 14

Cartoon: "Nightschool" . . . . . page 16

Editorial:

The teaching performance

Have you ever thought of the many ways in which teaching is a performance? Like the narrator in a television documentary, for example, you have to be prepared, explain things clearly but be personable, keep things moving, have some visuals ready, know how to keep your audience interested. Unlike the TV show host, though, you also have to make sure your audience understands, and you are responsible for their development. Also unlike the TV speaker, you have to do it every day, sometimes many hours at at a time.

Yet television performers never do their job alone. They always function as part of a team. Watch the credits after any show—even the simplest talk show. You'll see they not only have the obvious technical staff, but also researchers, advisors, trainers, writers, creative directors, and a long list of interesting job titles of the many people who contributed to that show.

An ESL production

Wouldn't it be fun to teach with that kind of support staff? Imagine you have a Curriculum Consultant, a Technician, a Linguistics Advisor, a Speech Therapist, an Artist, etc., whom you meet before and after every lesson to hash out strategies and approaches, observations and ideas!

We have often fantasized about such a scenario, where the same attention is applied to teaching as to, say, film-making. But who would pay for all that? It's just a dream, of course.

But what it supposedly takes to be a great ESL teacher would make a list of talents, knowledge and skills that would go on for pages! Longer than the credits of any show. And yet we expect ourselves to be able to do it alone. Those are admirable goals, perhaps, but impossible.

Make a team

If we really want to achieve excellence in teaching, we need to find models of how teachers can work together as a team, providing resources and assistance for each other to make everyone a better teacher, and serve the needs of the students more effectively.

One teachers' group

We ran across one such model at the recent TESOL conference in Long Beach, California. A group of teachers offered a poster session about an organization that they started, called "CAPS," or Capital Area Pronunciation Specialists. These teachers were interested in learning how to teach pronunciation skills more effectively, so they started a self-training forum.

The need for such information is probably one many teachers recognize—teacher (or tutor) training programs rarely prepare their graduates adequately in how to teach pronunciation skills.

The group (currently about 35 members) meets four times a year. They pay a small annual dues to fund a newsletter, have a chairperson, a steering committee and other officers, but still manage to keep the group informal and fun.

Their reason for being is the sharing of expertise, but the group also offers a chance for teachers from many different levels to interact and learn about each others programs. And members have opportunities to discuss real-life problems of students and to find out how other instructors handle such problems.

To us, this sounds like a major step forward—move over, Dan Rather!

Hands-on English

Volume V, Number 1
May/June 1995

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About the publication

Hands-on English is a small, independent publication that was started in 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who has taught ESL in many settings, including adult education programs, a refugee program, community college, and a university intensive English program. . . and survived to write about it!

Articles and ideas are contributed by experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have an article or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

About our Minigrants program

Hands-on English awards a few small grants (of $200 each) annually for practical classroom projects. Applications are due April 30, and are available upon request.

Your editor, Anna Silliman, hopes you will share some of your teaching ideas with our readers. We'd like to hear from you!

Subscribe today!

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Letters

Approves of video lesson

Dear Editor,

We are a non-profit agency offering ESL/ABE/GED classes. We have found your publication very helpful! I have just finished perusing this current issue. It's *very* good!

I especially like the "Blockbuster Video" (see Vol. IV, No.5, p.8) exercises. We currently have a class called "Exploring English through Films." We use a text called **American Picture Show** (Prentice-Hall Regents, 1-800-375-2375) as well as materials created by myself and the instructors. So to see a video lesson in your publication was great!

Thanks and keep up the good work.

Sincerely,
Scott Cunningham
NAF Learning Center
Scottsbluff, Nebraska

We got lots of enthusiastic comments about that video lesson. Perhaps you'd like to send us one of ***your*** *video lessons--I'm sure our readers would be interested. — Editor*

Pronunciation probs

My students are Latinos. They are accustomed to saying "estudiar, estudiante," – hence they put the "e" sound in front of the English words *student, school, study* and other words beginning with an *s* and followed by a consonant.

Do any of your readers have suggestions on helping Latinos to drop the "e" before English words beginning with *s* and followed by a consonant?

James Shea
Rye, New York

Wants some samples

The March/April issue on ACTION is great. Do you still have some samples we can give out at our June State Literacy Missions meeting to encourage subscriptions? We'd appreciate it. Thank you.

Fran deCordova
Midwest City, Oklahoma

Thanks for helping us to spread the word, Fran! We are pleased to send sample issues to anyone who is attending a meeting or conference and might have a chance to show ***Hands-on English*** *to others! (Or, we can send one sample and a sign-up sheet for those who want a sample mailed to them.) Word of mouth is our best way to reach new readers! —Editor*

Don't need federal funds?

I have found many useful ideas in this magazine, but I am sorry to see you beating the drum for federal handouts. I am treasurer of our LVA organization here and we do very well with no federal money. Adult education can do the same. It is not the responsibility of the federal government to educate people.

D.M. Rogers
Hayes, Virginia

Yes, LVA gets by without federal funds, but is able to help only a tiny fraction of the people who need these services. That is why, at the national level, LVA has been at the forefront of the fight to prevent funding cuts to adult education!

Time out from teaching

I am currently on leave from my job, but am renewing anyway. I'd miss your magazine if I didn't receive it! Thanks!

Best wishes,
Janet Mersereau

Enjoy your time off, Janet. We hope you come back to teaching refreshed and ready to go! —Editor.

. . .and calls

Workplace interest

We've had a number of calls from people eager to network with others who are developing materials and programs for workplace education. If you are also seeking such a network, give us a call and we'll add your name to the list.

Wouldn't it be nice if everyone had e-mail? E-mail makes it so much easier to network! If you are just getting online, be sure to sign up for TESLIT-L. This is a discussion list of adult ESL educators, including some interested in workplace issues.

Pronunciation activity:

Make your own tongue-t visters!

*by **Anne LeWarne**, Intensive English Program, Lewis-Clark State College in Lewiston, Idaho.*

Editor's note: Anne says she's used this activity successfully with an intermediate-level class, but it would probably work with any level.

Tongue twisters

In order to practice distinguishing difficult sounds with my intermediate aural/oral students, we wrote and practiced original tongue twisters.

How to do it

1. I began by writing : "She sells sea shells down by the sea shore" on the board. Most students were familiar with this common tongue twister. Students identified ***s*** and ***sh*** as the sounds being contrasted.
2. We discussed other sounds which were difficult to differentiate and made a short list. My Japanese students, for example, volunteered s/sh, b/v, f/h and l/r. My Korean students added b/p and j/ch.
3. In groups of three, students chose two similar sounds to contrast. They made lists of words containing the two sounds. Then they used these lists to write a tongue twister.
4. As the students worked on writing the tongue twisters, they had two rules to guide them:
   a. Their sentences had to make sense grammatically.
   b. They had to use at least three words containing each of their sounds (ie: three words with an ***s*** sound and three words with an ***sh*** sound).
5. Each group wrote their best tongue twister on the board and the class read them out loud.
6. I copied the tongue twisters into my notebook, so that over the course of the eight-week term we began classes by discussing two sounds and practicing one of the students' original tongue twisters.

The result

This lesson proved to be fun and valuable in making students aware of the differences between close sounds, and giving them a chance to distinguish the sounds.

Why it works

The students created their own materials for this lesson, based on the pronunciation problems that they identified themselves. Because of this, they will identify more closely with the material, and remember it better.

Student-made materials are always the most valuable ones!

"She sells shoes at a small shoe store on Chicago's south side."

"Vicious boys broke the very big vase with a baseball bat."

Tools & techniques:

Dozens of dialog doings!

Editor's note: We received another missive from our correspondent in Siberia! Margo Menconi has some very useful ideas about using dialogs, which we're delighted to share with you here.

Teaching techniques using dialogs

by Margo Menconi in Bratsk, Russia.

I've really gotten to like using dialogs with my students, and find that I use them differently at different levels. The techniques I refer to here, though, I've mostly used with complete beginners. This list is not in any particular order. Here goes!

1. **Scrambled dialogs**—Students put the lines of a dialog in order. Use this as:
   a. a preview activity
   b. a review activity
   c. followed by listening to verify their accuracy.
2. **Listening (or reading) cloze exercises**—Students fill in selected missing words from the dialog. This can be:
   a. random cloze
   b. grammar cloze (i.e., with articles, determiners, or prepositions, etc. missing)
3. **Writing/creating**—Students write their own dialogs:
   a. on a theme
   b. using specific functions of speech
   c. in a specific situation
4. **Discussion**—Students answer comprehension questions about a dialog. This can be oral, or also written.
5. **Grammar**—Point out and teach a grammar point as found in the dialog.
6. **Pair work**—Students memorize short dialogs using sentence strips (I especially use this with complete beginners).
7. **Vocab expansion**—Teach more vocabulary or phrases on the theme or situation found in the dialog.
8. **Expand the dialog**—Point out functions (i.e., greetings, offering, agreeing, etc.) in the dialog and develop them further.
9. **Teach culture**—Point out cultural aspects of the dialog, maybe discuss and compare with students' native culture(s).
10. **Teach body language**—
    a. What would the people in the dialog be doing as they speak?
    b. What do their actions mean for communication?
11. **Teach intonation**—Have the students try to make intonation markings on their own. Then explain how intonation can change meaning and can be an important part of the communication process.
12. **Substitutions**—Have students make word substitutions in the dialog that will change the meaning.
13. **Dictation**—After students are familiar with a dialog, use parts of it for dictation review.
14. **Respond to content**—Have students respond to the dialog by agreeing or disagreeing with the characters, or by describing the characters and the situation. This may be done orally or in written form.
15. **Change the dialog**—brainstorm and discuss possible alternative statements or responses for the characters in the dialog. Discuss the appropriateness and connotations of each change.
16. **Dialog flow charts**—Write dialogs with multiple possibilities of responses. This gives the student some power to direct the conversation in a semi-controlled situation, while learning appropriate speech patterns.

If anyone has any other ideas I'd be delighted to learn of them!

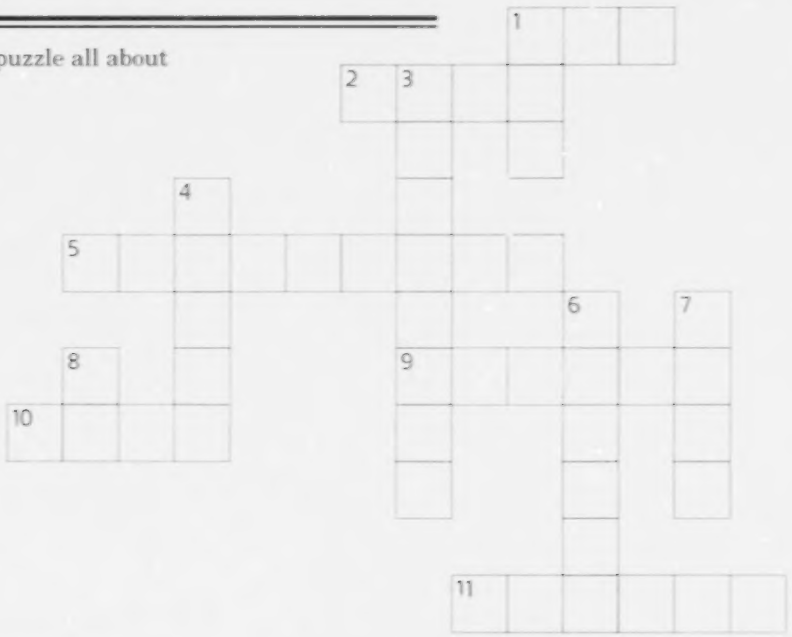
Student A: Hi, _____. How are you?
Student B: I'm _____. How about you?
Student A: I'm _____.
Student B: What did you do _____?
Student A:
_____.
Student B: Oh, that's interesting.

Student One: Hi, _____. How is your _____?
Student Two: (*He/she*) is _____.
Student One: Oh, I'm (*sorry/glad*) to hear that.
Student Two: See you _____.

Crossword puzzle:

Sorry!

Here's a puzzle all about apologizing.



Across clues

1. Student to teacher: "I'm sorry, but I can't come to school tomorrow."
   Teacher: "Oh, that's too _____." We're having a party for all the students.
2. "I'm sorry I'm _____. I missed my bus."
5. Mother to son: "You shouldn't say bad things to your sister. I want you to _____ to her. Go and tell her you are sorry."
9. Man on bus: "_____ me, is the next stop Third Street?"
   Other man: "This bus doesn't stop at Third Street. You're on the wrong bus."
10. John (on the telephone): "Hello? Fred?"
    Fred: "John, is that you? Where are you? Where is my car? I've been waiting for you."
    John: "Well, I'm _____ sorry but I had a small accident. I'm going to be late."
    Fred: "Oh, no! My car!"
11. Grandfather to sales clerk: "_____ me?" I didn't hear you clearly."
    Sales clerk: "I SAID, SIXTEEN DOLLARS!"
    Grandfather: "Oh, That's too much."

Down clues

1. Man on airplane: "Excuse me, but I think you are sitting in my seat—18C."
   Second man: "Oh, I _____ your pardon. My mistake." (He gets up and moves.)
   First man: "Thank you." (He sits down.)
3. Manager: "Oh, no! You spilled coffee on the table cloth and the guests!"
   Waitress: "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to do it. It was an _____."
4. Boyfriend: "I forgot about our date last night. I'm so _____. Can you forgive me?"
   Girlfriend: "I don't know."
6. Student (very sleepy): "Hello?"
   Woman on telephone: "Hello? Is this Lear's Department Store?"
   Student: "No, it isn't. You have the wrong _____."
   Woman: "Oh, sorry."
7. Janet: "My uncle died yesterday."
   Jim: "Oh, I'm sorry to _____ that."
   Janet: "Thank you."
8. Teacher: "Andre, do you have a question?"
   Student: "Yes I do, but my name isn't Andre."
   Teacher: "Oh, excuse _____, Anton!"
   Student: "That's OK."

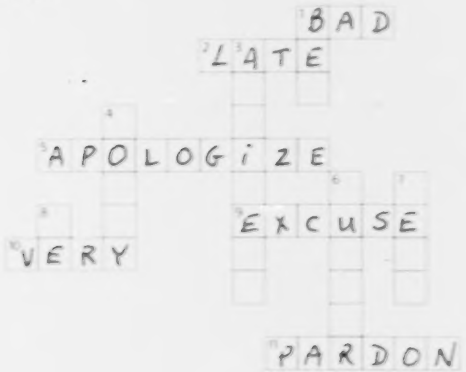
Word list:

accident
apologize
bad
beg
excuse
hear
late
me
number
pardon
sorry
very

Write your own puzzle clues!

Student 1

Write a clue for each of the ACROSS words in this puzzle. Then cut off the clues and give them to your partner to solve.



Across clues

1.

2.

5.

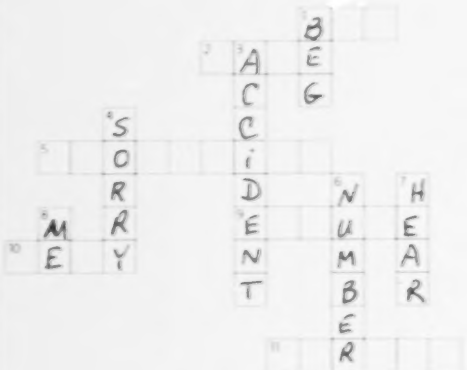
9.

10.

11.

Student 2

Write a clue for each of the DOWN words in this puzzle. Then cut off the clues and give them to your partner to solve.



Down clues

1.

3.

4.

6.

7.

8.

Teaching tips:

Have your students do the ready-made puzzle on page 6 first. For lower-level students, include the "Word list" to help them succeed at the puzzle. For high beginners or intermediates, don't include the word list (cover it over before photo-copying.)

Each of the "clues" in the puzzle is actually a situation in which some sort of apology is called for. Ask the students to select one of the dialogs to expand and do as a role-play. They can present these to the whole class when ready.

You can use the same puzzle to have students write their own clues. Copy this page (p.7) and cut it down the middle. Have students pair up, then give one of the half-sheets to each student.

They will each write clues, then give them to their partner to solve.

This is a good activity for a multi-level group, since each student writes clues at their own level.

From the field:

A local Multicultural Fair pleases all!

Recently teachers, students and community members organized an all-day Multicultural Fair at Fowler High School in Syracuse, New York. We interviewed Karen Campbell, an ESL teacher there, about the event to find out what happened, how it was organized, and what the benefits were. From what she told us, we feel this event may inspire you to try this in your own school or community!

The organizing process

We asked Karen how such a seemingly major event was organized. She answered that it wasn't really too difficult to organize, adding: "People working together can accomplish so much!"

A volunteer committee at the school, consisting of 8 to 10 teachers, did (or delegated) most of the organizing tasks. To find community members and vendors interested in participating, the committee used their own contacts to spread the word. For example, one teacher contacted the area Refugee Center about the event, which in turn contacted former students who might want to participate. Groups and vendors were offered a free table at the event.

A great deal of cooperation came from the school district and the building custodians in supplying tables; the committee and other volunteers helped to set up the tables and cover them with white paper.

Some coordination with the presenters was necessary. For example, many of them had to arrive early enough in the morning to set up. Karen noted that one problem that came up was the need for more outlets and power cords!

The event

On the day of the Multicultural Fair, guests arrived at a reception area, where they signed in and were welcomed by a committee of students. Guests, as well as students and teachers then could proceed to the exhibit area, where more than 50 booths were set up.

The booths included food vendors, vendors from from numerous local businesses, and displays by local community groups as well as by students. At one booth, for example, African-American food specialties were available for sale; the vendor happened to be an employee of the school. Another booth offered Vietnamese food for sale; a group of Vietnamese students worked all day to keep up the supply of eggrolls.

Non-food items were also for sale: a Hmong group displayed needlework at one booth, for example. Various community groups, such as a Native American group, had displays. ESL students from the school had prepared displays about their cultures and they spent the day talking with people who came to their booths. Social Studies classes in the school also presented student displays on various topics.

Performances

The High School band provided music, and their bandleader did a very professional job of emceeing the events. At various intervals during the day, the Master of Ceremonies would introduce a group of performers. The audience was then treated to music or dance from both student and community groups. Between performances, the M.C. played a selection of music tapes which helped to maintain a special atmosphere.

Karen recalls that many of the performances were really spectacular, including the bagpiper (who was a former student of the school), the Puerto Rican dancers, and a black vocal group.

How did it go?

When asked how the event went, Karen responded with: "better than we even hoped!" She said the whole day was marked with an atmosphere of excitement and involvement, and a relaxed mood unusual for a school event.

The reasons for the success of the event, she feels, include: the personality and skill of the M.C., the 100% support of the teachers in the school, the involvement of community members, and the chance that many students got to express themselves. It was primarily a students' event, she noted, with many students taking on responsible tasks and throwing themselves wholeheartedly into the work.

The benefits

Students who participated in the event certainly gained in self-esteem. They received recognition for their efforts and in some cases for their culture. Many of them got some good practice in public speaking!

For everyone involved, it was a good experience in cooperation among a broad spectrum of people of all ages and nationalities.

Here are the lists of exhibits and performances from this one-day Multicultural Fair. We thought you would be interested to see what a wonderful variety the event included!

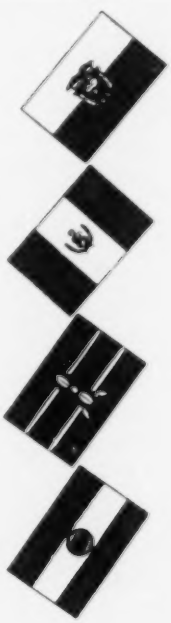
List of Exhibits

Table number	Exhibit
1	St. Marie Among the Iroquois
2	France
3	West Africa - Dr. King School
4	America - Refreshments
5	Peru
6	Africa/America - Bellgrove Church
7	Puerto Rico
8	China and Japan
9	Puerto Rico - Display and Food
10	Italy - Food
11	Jamaica
12	Native Americans - Crafts
13	The Learning Place
14	Italy - Pizza
15	Vietnam - Food
16	Vietnam - Crafts
17	Pakistan
18	India
19	Hmong
20	Red Cross
21	NAACP - Syracuse University
22	Lou Adams' Band
23	International Foods
24	Avon Products
25	Student Leadership
26	Greece - Florina Pita House
27	Ecuador
28	Colombia
29	Russia - St. Peter and Paul
30	Laos
31	Cambodia

(continued. . .)

Performances

Fowler H.S. Wind Ensemble
Bagpiper
All City Gospel Chorus
Fashion Show - Dr. King School
Greek Dancers - St. Sophia's Church
Fowler Jazz Ensemble
Black Celestial Voice
Soloist - Zendrea Mitchell
Community Gospel Choir
Puerto Rican Dance Ensemble
African American/Steppin' with Style
Vietnam Ballroom Dancing
Irish Dancers - Butler Academy



News & notes

Upcoming conferences

◆ June 20-24, 1995—**Computer Assisted Language Instruction Consortium (CALICO)** in Middlebury, Vermont. Contact CALICO at (919) 660-3180.

◆ July 7-9, 1995—**National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)** annual conference in New York, NY. Call: 800-369-NCTE.

◆ August 4-5, 1995—**National Center on Adult Literacy** Technology conference in Philadelphia, PA. Contact NCAL, 215-898-2100.

"Hands-on" in database

Hands-on English is proud to announce that we are now indexed in the ERIC database. If you don't know what that is, get ready for a mouthful: it's the Educational Resources Information Center, National Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics.

This means that researchers accessing that database (available online and on microfiche in major libraries around the world) will find us there. Our document number (for Vols. I-III) is ED 374 686.

While this news may not seem too important to our readers, we feel it lends us some prestige, and a little more visibility. Thanks, ERIC!

Online opportunity

For you online enthusiasts, there's another Internet discussion list specifically for adult ESL **policy** issues. This is a new one—it started up only this April and is sponsored by the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL). If you're interested, why not join and give it a try?

To subscribe to the list send this message:
subscribe NIFL-ESL firstname lastname
to this address:
listproc@novel.nifl.gov

For discussion of **classroom** issues, TESLIT-L is your online source. This list has been active for a couple of years now. See our article about it in Vol. IV, No. 1, p. 8 of *Hands-on English* (Or, if you need instructions for joining, contact our office—we can fax you an information sheet.).

Nifty verb disc

Every now and then we run across a gizmo we think your students might like (and we like gadgets, too!). This one is a laminated disc about 10 inches (25cm) across with 99 English verbs around the edge. You slide the inside disc around to point to the infinitive form of a verb, and the other four forms (present, present participle, past, past participle) appear in the little windows. Students might enjoy using it to test themselves, or in pair practice. Anyway, it makes a nice change from regular notepaper or flashcards.

To order the Ogelsby Verb Disc, send $3.95 plus $10 shipping to: Pippin Publishing, 380 Esna Park Drive, Markham, Ontario, Canada L3R 1H5. Ask for ISBN 88751-0396.

Action alert update

Thanks to the concerted response of people in the Adult Education and literacy fields, major cuts to this year's adult ed funding have been averted in the U.S. Congress. Good work, everybody!

The next big challenge is the funding for *next* year. This will involve the reauthorization of the Adult Education Act, as well as appropriating money for it. Please stay in touch with your state Adult Education coordinator, or your Literacy Program director, for up-to-date information on where that legislation is headed.

And, as we recommended in our last issue, contact your Representative in Congress and your Senators on a regular basis, to let them know how important these programs are to educationally disadvantaged adults and their families!

Foreign language teaching

Language teaching techniques used by teachers of foreign languages are very often of interest to ESL teachers. If you would like to network with foreign language teachers and find out what they're doing, there are two publications you might want to subscribe to.

Mosaic, a Canadian publication, comes out four times a year and carries articles designed to help new teachers understand

Continued on p.11

On the market

Reviews of useful ESL materials

"English for Success: Bridge to Literacy," *Books 1 and 2 by Grace Massey Holt and Susan Gaer (1993 Dominie Press, 1-800-232-4570) $9.95 ea., Teacher's Guide $14.95. ISBN 1-56270-0041-3 (Book 1).*

If you're like me, you've had a hard time finding materials for beginning learners with low literacy levels. I have found that Books One and Two of ***English for Success*** work particularly well for this population. Unlike basic literacy-level texts, the series assumes that the learners have some basic literacy skills in English, but the literacy and cognitive demands are still very low.

Like many survival texts, these books are organized by topic: for example, health and family. The texts are different from others in that they give learners direct practice with basic vocabulary through activities that progress from receptive to productive skills. Because of its communicative rather than grammatical focus, the series gives learners many opportunities to practice speaking, listening, reading and writing in a non-intimidating way.

Both my volunteer aides and I have found these texts easy to teach from. The very useful and extensive teacher's guides, which I highly suggest, offer many expansion activities and teaching tips. Further, I have found these books to work quite well in my open-entry class: the chapters can easily be used out of order, and the teacher can readily add grammar or vocabulary mini-lessons which serve as review for the existing students and instruction for the newcomers. Since both texts are aimed primarily at the vocabulary level, they do not contain longer readings, but because of the books' thematic organization, it is easy to supplement with meaningful reading texts and writing tasks about each topic.

My students have found the format of the books very easy to follow and for that reason, they have felt more successful since working with this series. Before, my class often expressed confusion with many of the popular survival texts because of their grammatical focus or literacy demands; they became easily discouraged. Because these texts present language in a way that makes sense to learners, my students have remarked that the books are very understandable. The confused looks on their faces have disappeared. I recommend the *English for Success: Bridge to Literacy* series to anyone who is working with a similar population.

—Reviewed by Laureen Fredella
Latin American Assoc., Atlanta, Georgia

News & notes, cont'd from p.10

important language teaching concepts. A subscription is $10 a year and is available in Canada at: *Mosaic*, P.O. Box 847, Welland, Ontario L3B 5Y5. In the U.S., send to: *Mosaic*, P.O. Box 890, Lewiston, NY 14092-0890.

On a chattier level there is ***Tongues Untied, A Collaborative Forum for Modern Language Teachers***. This is edited by Donald Houghton in Newtown, Pennsylvania and carries an interesting variety of articles and information, some of it quite applicable to ESL, and perhaps of particular interest to high school teachers.

A one-year subscription for an individual is $15 (six issues). Send to: *Tongues Untied*, Box 4300, George School, Newtown, PA 18940.

Workplace materials

Teacher-made materials—Teresa Falagrady and some colleagues have written an activity guide for teaching ESL in the workplace. They would like other workplace instructors to try out their activities and give them some feedback! They would also like to exchange workplace information with other teachers.

The Guide integrates communication activities with the workplace environment. It is 89 pages and comes binder-ready. The cost is $16.90 which includes shipping. Send to: Workplace Education Program, Emily Griffith Opportunity School, 1250 Welton St., Denver, CO 80204-2197.

From the field:

Coming in Cold

A teacher joins an established class

by ***Lucie Germer****, Marlborough, New Hampshire.*

The telephone rings.

"We need a teacher two evenings a week for the adult ESL class. They're mostly low intermediates, but it's really a mixed class. . . The previous teacher just wasn't able to continue."

It sounds interesting, so you accept and start to plan the first lesson, checking all those fine books of ESL hints. It's surprising to discover that there are a lot of exercises designed to introduce students to each other—but how should the lesson go when they all know each other and *you're* the unknown quantity?

Information that would be useful, but that is probably unavailable includes:

- Why did the other teacher leave? There's a big difference between getting a better job and not being able to stand the class any more.
- What was the style of teaching, and were the students happy with it?
- What books/materials/themes have already been covered? Is there a text, and what page is the class working on?
- What are the real levels in the class? Are the students literate? What exactly do they want to achieve?

The first lesson should be carefully designed to:

* Introduce you to the students and let them know they can feel comfortable and safe in the class (especially important when walking into what has been a bad situation).
* Find out how the students perceived the class before and what they liked and didn't like about it.
* Find out what they really want to learn.
* Clarify your style and expectations of and for the class.

A sample lesson

Here's a good introductory lesson for this situation which will help you to accomplish these goals and get some of the information you need from the students.

1. Put your full name on the board. Tell the students how to pronounce it and what you like to be called. Then let them use the name to ask questions. Are you married, and if so, has this led to a name change? Do you love or hate your middle name? Who named you? If they don't ask, tell them, then broaden the discussion to their names. Let them tell each other (and you) interesting things about their names. While they talk, listen to both the language and the style of interaction.

2. Describe your expectations and ground rules, checking with the class to make sure they understand and agree. Get their suggestions. The ground rules will depend on your own style of teaching. Mine usually include reminders that everyone should have a chance to talk but that no on *has* to talk; that no one laughs at anyone's way of talking; and that I like questions and will always stop to answer them.

3. If the class is in the middle of a lesson which you are familiar with, spend some time on it. This provides continuity for the students while giving them a chance to compare your style with what they're used to. If the students announce that, by the way, they're working on lesson six, get as much information as possible. Promise to take the book home and plan the lesson, do so, then teach it next time.

If no one seems to know what they've been doing in class, it may be because the previous teacher was really disorganized, because the class is still feeling shy, or because the students still aren't used to your accent or style. Let it pass and go on the the next step.

4. Find out what the students would like to get out of the class. If the answers are generalities like "pronunciation" or "writing" find out when and where they have problems. Are there specific kinds of vocabulary they want to learn? Take notes, and use them in planning.

5. Then, for a change of pace, do something fun—it can be as simple as Hangman or Bingo. Combined with the previous work the class will know that you're both businesslike and relaxed.

6. If the class has dialog journals or is literate, ask the students to write something for homework introducing themselves and giving suggestions to help you teach them better.

7. Then go home, put your feet up, and drink some herb tea. It was a good first lesson, and you deserve to relax.

Index to articles in Volume IV

Here's our annual round-up of ***Hands-on English*** *articles! We also have a combined index of Vols. I–IV available on request. (Please send a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Thanks!)*

Advertisers

Delta Systems Co. IV-3.

New Readers Press. IV-5.

Orbis Publications. IV-1 to 6.

Passport Publications. IV-1 to 4.

Pro Lingua Associates. IV-1 to 6.

TESOL, Inc. IV-6.

Vocational English Lang. Svc. IV-1 to 5.

Authors

Armstrong, Fiona. "The REAL TEST of student learning." From the field. IV-4, p.6.

Brody, Jane. "A writing incentive project." Minigrants award winner. IV-3, p.12.

Darden, Betty. "Multi-level classes—they can work!" Letter to Hands-on, IV-1, p.4.

Egbert, Joy. "Making connections in the ESL classroom." Tools & techniques. IV-5, p.4.

Gaer, Susan. "Question-answer-question." Idea file, IV-2, p.5.

Gard, Eleanor. "Famous quotations." Cultural activity. IV-3, p.8.

Grant, Bobbi. "A plan for my future." Minigrants award winner, IV-1, p. 10.

Grove, Carl. "Getting online with TESLIT-L." Tools & techniques, IV-1, p.8.

Hanslin, Jean. "Jack O'Lantern 'operation.'" Holiday activity. IV-3, p.10.

Hargesheimer, Christy. "Class minutes." Tools & techniques. IV-4, p.12.

Hervieux, Janet. "Scams." Reading & discussion activity. IV-3, p.7.

--"The Thief's Mistake." Reading activity. IV-6, p.7.

Holmes, Karen. "Families reading together." Minigrants award winner, IV-2, p.13.

Indelicato, Nancy and Wendy Kilpatrick. "The prepositional pitfall." Grammar grab-bag, IV-5, p.6.

Keshav, Nicole. "Suicide, accident or homicide?" Reading activity. IV-4, p.10.

Kwitkin, Marilyn. "Consumer Economics Project." Minigrants award winner, IV-6, p.8.

Mills, Eleanor. "Student research: the invention report." From the field, IV-1, p.7.

Novak, Shirley. "A Valentines Day project." From the field. IV-5, p.11.

Parlato, Sal. "Streets, roads & avenues." Abbreviations. IV-6, p. 5.

Ramos, Olivia. "Combining sentences." Grammar grab-bag, IV-3 p.6.

Rosario, Ismael. "Putting the learner in the drivers seat." Tutors, too IV-1, p.9.

Sager, Sue. "Remembering Mother's Day." Cultural activity, IV-6, p.6.

Selleck, Denise. "Thought cards for writing and speaking." Tools & techniques, IV-1, p.5.

Tigue, Bill. "Using CNN Newsroom in ESL class." Tools & techniques. Vol. IV-3, p.11.

Weidlein, Kristin. "An ongoing (imaginary) restaurant project." Tools & techniques. IV-6, p.12.

Zwaryczuk, Juanita. "Blockbuster video lesson." Tools & techniques, IV-5, p.8.

See also: **Hints & tips**

Cultural activities & info

Career goals. "A Plan for My Future." IV-1, p.10.

Consumer Economics Project. Students do comparison shopping. IV-6, p.8.

Famous quotations. Cross-cultural discussion. IV-3, p.8.

Jack O'Lantern "operation. IV-3, p.10.

Remembering Mother's Day. Students write cards. IV-6, p.6.

A Valentines Day project. IV-5, p.11.

Editorials

A stellar career. Changes in the field. IV-2, p.1.

From the global to the local. Students as individuals. IV-3, p.1.

Literacy education threatened. Guest editorial by Emily Hacker. IV-5, p.1.

The missing card. Speculations on a bit of teaching realia. IV-4, p.1.

Planting trees as metaphor for teaching and social change. IV-6, p.1.

Special ACTION alert on changes in legislation affection adult ed. IV-6, insert.

Grammar grab-bag

Abbreviations. "Streets, roads & avenues." IV-6, p.5.

Combining sentences. IV-3, p.6.

Correction symbols. "Correcting student writing." IV-5, p.12.

"The prepositional pitfall." IV-5, p.6.

Question review. "Question-answer-question." IV-2, p.5.

Group activities

A consumer economics project. Students evaluate products in groups. IV-6, p.8.

Group story writing. IV-4, p.5.

Hints & tips

Color coding on the blackboard. IV-3, p.14.

Copy-saving tip. IV-3, p.14.

Creat a class textbook. IV-5, p.5.

40 helpful hints & tips for making your ESL teaching easier and better! IV-2, p.6.

Give longer 'wait time.' IV-6, p.11.

Photos for conversation. IV-3, p.14.

Puppets for kids and adults. IV-6, p.11.

Questions practice. IV-6, p.11.

Speak English, please! Tape recorders monitor student language. IV-1, p.12.

The TV interview show. IV-1, p.12.

Minigrants program

Announcement of next year's awards. IV-3, p.13.

Reports from award winners: IV-1, p.10; IV-2, p.13; IV-3, p.12; IV-6, p.8.

Puzzles

Career categories, a crossword puzzle. IV-1, p.11.

Holiday customs—Christmas, a crossword puzzle. IV-4, p.4.

Many ways to say "no!", a crossword puzzle. IV-5, p.10.

Many ways to say "yes," a crossword puzzle. IV-6, p.4.

Saying 'Thank you', a crossword puzzle. IV-2, p.3.

Time, time, time; a multi-level crossword puzzle. IV-3, p.4.

Reading & literacy

Families reading together. IV-2, p.13.

"Scams." A reading and discussion activity. IV-3, p.7.

"Suicide, accident or homicide?" IV-4, p.11.

"The Thief's Mistake." IV-6, p.7.

Reviews: On the market

Developing Vocabulary Skills, Second Edition, by Dennis Keen. Heinle & Heinle. IV-1, p.1.

Now Hear This! High beginning Listening, Speaking & Pronunciation, 2nd Edition by Barbara H. Foley. Heinle & Heinle 1994. IV-2, p.13.

Reading Workout by Jann Huizenga and Maria Thomas-Ruzic. Heinle & Heinle 1994. IV-4, p.13.

Sing it! Learn English through Song by Millie Grenough. McGraw-Hill 1994. IV-5, p.13.

Tools & techniques for instructors

Class minutes. Providing continuity to your classes. IV-4, p.12.

Classroom design; arranging your classroom. IV-4, p.9.

Closed-caption video for ESL. IV-1, p.6.

Getting online with TESLIT-L. IV-1, p.8.

How to organize your "idea file." IV-1, p.13.

Making connections in the ESL classroom. Linking lessons. IV-5, p.4.

One question interview, revisited. IV-2, p.15.

An ongoing (imaginary) restaurant project. IV-6, p.12.

The REAL TEST of student learning. IV-4, p.6.

Success in a multi-level class. IV-1, p.4.

"Thought cards" for writing and speaking. IV-1, p.5.

Using "CNN Newsroom" in ESL class. IV-3, p.11.

Tutors, too

Putting the learner in the driver's seat. A sample lesson. IV-1, p.9.

Writing

Correcting student writing; correction symbols. IV-5, p.12.

Group story writing. Idea file. IV-4, p.5.

Student research: the invention report. IV-1, p.7.

A writing incentive project. IV-3, p.12.

Hints & tips

Good class starter

This useful starting activity is sent to us by Mary Lu Leon, teacher at San Leandro Adult Education School in San Leandro, California.

Although I start the class promptly, many ESL students do not arrive on time. To avoid starting the lesson with important explanations or information when the class is only half full, I devised a 10-minute oral exercise on Mondays and Fridays.

On the blackboard, I put the sentence: "What did you do over the weekend?" Then I list the names of all the students present. One student selects a name, turns and asks that person the question. After answering, that student selects a name for the next question. As students straggle in, I add their names to the board (erasing those names that have been already called). Thus, we have practice in the simple past tense and we learn about the leisure activities of the students.

On Friday I ask: "What are you going to do this weekend?" Students follow the above procedure, but now they use the future tense or will use "I plan to. . ."

Sometimes I vary the sentence by using forms that we don't often use: "What were you doing on Saturday at 2:00?" Students use the past continuous tense to answer.

Bonus benefit

I didn't realize until I started this exercise that many students did not know the names of the others in the class. I assumed that since I called upon them daily and used their names that everyone knew everyone else. Not true!

Classified ads

To place a classified ad, send your notice of 30 words or less with US $10 (subscribers get a discount of 50%) to: Hands-on English, P.O. Box 256, Crete, NE 68333 USA. Fax/phone: (402) 826-5426. Toll free call-in 1-800-ESL- HAND.

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HUH?
HUH?
HUH?
IT'LL BE QUEBEC! YUGOSLAVIA! THE TOWER OF BABEL!
PSSST! IT'S ALL A BIG PLOT!
SHOULD WE TELL HIM?
THINK HE'D LISTEN?
OH MY GOD— I KNEW IT! I KNEW IT!!!
DON'T YOU JUST LOVE THESE NICE "ENGLISH ONLY" PEOPLE?
NOW HE'LL ASK US FOR DONATIONS
SORRY—I CAN'T SPEAK ENGLISH...
KENO PHO BIA

Hands-on **English**

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Contents:

Letters ....page 3

Multi-level crossword puzzle: In the courtroom ....page 4

Tools & techniques: Word-processor language activities ....page 6

Group work: Practice with averages ....page 8

Grammar grab-bag: "How often..." in a pet shop page11

Conversation: An entertainment survey page12

Guidelines for authors ....page 13

News & notes ....page 14

"Nightschool" An ESL cartoon ....page 16

Editorial:

Tending/attending to teaching

A neighbor recently asked us for some gardening advice and we were happy to oblige, but as we talked it became clear that our neighbor wasn't looking for a lot of concepts about mulching, soil building, organic methods, etc., etc., (which we were delighted to explain!) . Instead she was looking for some tricks that would make it easy to grow things. She didn't actually enjoy gardening.

We realized suddenly that what makes a good gardener is very hard to define—much like defining what makes a good teacher. You can usually see the results—the plants grow well and the students succeed. But how you did it seems impossible to boil down to a formula, much less explain to someone else how to do it.

That's because the key to success, in both gardening and teaching (they are similar endeavors, in some ways, aren't they?) is not how you do it but what kind of attention you pay to it. There are many different ways to grow a successful garden, and many ways (nearly one zillion, to be exact) to teach a good class. But in each case, the successful gardener/teacher 'tends' something, which means paying a lot of attention to it. They have focussed their full attention on the process of growing/learning.

When you see teachers (and this includes tutors) who truly attend to the process of teaching, you often notice the following traits:

1. They enjoy it. No matter how much they may complain about all the problems of teaching, they come alive when they are with students.

2. They are fascinated with all the details of teaching. They read articles and talk with other teachers when they can, and the smallest tidbit or idea is of interest. They watch and observe their students and themselves all the time.

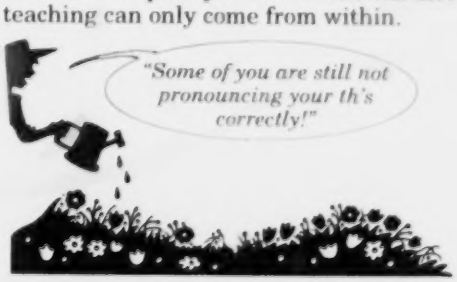
3. They are interested in their students on many different levels. Students can be just participants in the class, or they can be friends, colleagues, guinea pigs, teachers, irritants, ambassadors of their culture, and case studies. All of the above are possible.

4. They think about teaching all the time. Inspiration for lessons comes at odd moments—watching TV, driving the car, shopping. The students' learning needs are always in the back of their mind.

5. They don't take it easy. They experiment with new ways of teaching, they challenge themselves and their students even when everything already seems to be going OK.

6. They are problem solvers. Difficulties that arise in the classroom generate an enthusiastic search for solutions. They are willing to try anything that works.

Teaching, like gardening, is hard work and it is complex. It requires a lot of knowledge, flexibility and attention. The knowledge can be gained from reading, study and observation; the flexibility can be learned by training or by example; but the desire to pour your full attention into teaching can only come from within.



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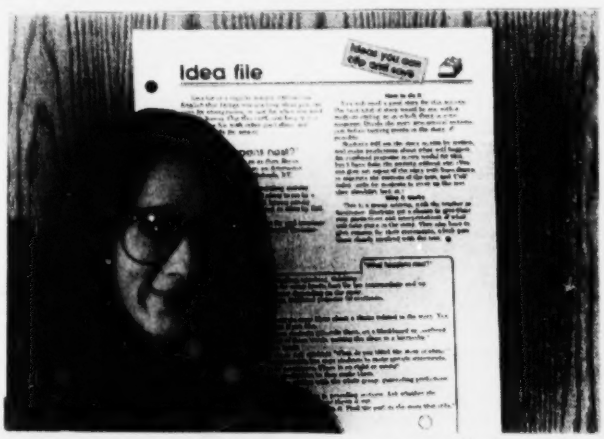
About the publication

Hands-on English is a small, independent publication that was started in 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who has taught ESL in many settings, including adult education programs, a refugee program, community college, and a university intensive English program. . . and survived to write about it!

Articles and ideas are contributed by experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have an article or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

About our Minigrants program

Hands-on English awards a few small grants (of $200 each) annually for practical classroom projects. Applications are due April 30, and are available upon request.



Your editor, Anna Silliman, hopes you will share some of your teaching ideas with our readers. We'd like to hear from you!

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Letters

Dialog pictures can spark stories

"I might suggest to Margo Menconi about using dialogs (see article in May/June issue, p.5) that sometimes I use the dialogs in the ESL books that have accompanying pictures. In those cases, in addition to the techniques she mentioned, I also ask the class, orally, to identify what they see in the pictures. I will ask a student to write on the blackboard as we are brainstorming. The the students, orally, re-arrange, re-word and generally edit the sentences to make their own story, with a little teacher help.

"This can be expanded to asking the students to write one of the stories during or after class. Also fictional and/or humorous stories can be created as their skill expands."

Joyce Grane, ESL Coordinator
YWCA Intercultural Service Center
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Follow-up on Tongue-twisters

Editor's note: In our last issue, we published a wonderful pronunciation activity by Anne LeWarne (May/June, p.4), called "Make your own tongue-twisters." Anne has sent us some of the sentences her students wrote, and we include them here for you to enjoy:

B/V:

Both my brother and my boyfriends have very good voices like bells. (Daisuke & Akiko Y.)

Bob visits the village to view Bangladesh. (Atsumi & Hiko)

L/R:

The light on the right of the wall needs to be repaired. (Han Cheol and Jae Ho)

Robin Williams rarely laughs at Marilyn Monroe's movies. (Kyoko, Tomoko, Hiromi)

S/SH:

She sells sashimi with soy sauce in a shop. (Yuki & Kazuhusa)

Shelly and Sam went shopping at Sears for some shoes and socks. (Nami & Mike)

...and for Spanish speakers

"I offer a suggestion for your reader, James Shea, whose Hispanic students add an 'e' before a word beginning with an 's' and a consonant. Let them READ the troublesome words. I've found it helpful; I think SEEING the letters reinforces the pronunciation.

"And here, for you, is a sort of Spanish tongue-twister contributed by Diego, my Nicaraguan student. I've found it more difficult than 'She sells...'

Compadre, compreme coco,
No compadre, no compro coco
Porque poco coco come,
Poco coco compro!

Try *that* fast!"

Edith Kennedy, LVA Monroe Co.
Key West, Florida

Renewal suggestion

"Any chance of renewing for more than 1 year, with a small discount as an incentive to do so? The year comes around so fast..."

Dorrienne Chinn
Seattle, Washington

Editor's note: This is a great idea, and one we will try to institute. It might save all of us some billing hassles and postage! We'll work on it!

Re-up for life?

Another reader writes, "You might want to consider a life-time subscriber category. . ." *Well, we certainly appreciate the enthusiasm, but...we'd be embarrassed to ask people how long they're planning to live!*

Recipe for success

"Your ideas have added 'spice' to both my 1:1 tutoring and my small group teaching. Keep up the good work."

Dorothy Juelich
Columbus, Ohio

And if that's not enough spice for you, we'll send you our salsa recipe! --Ed.

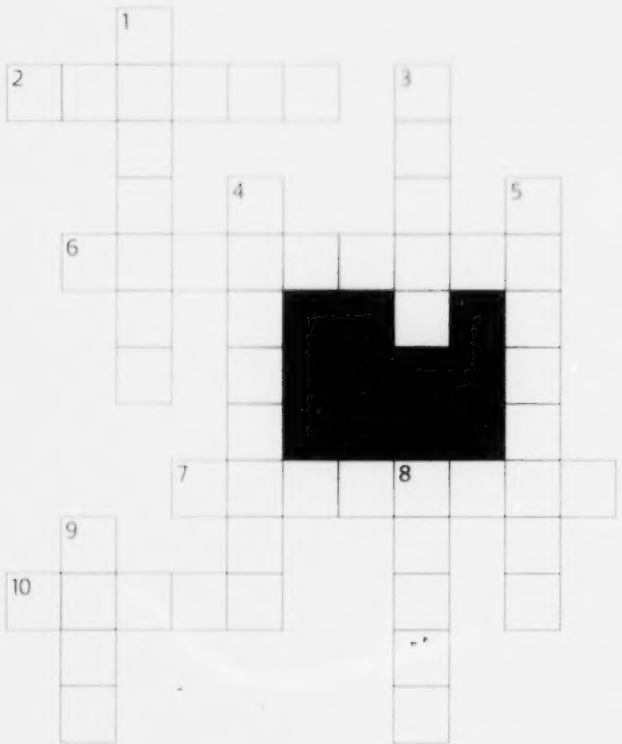
Sign of the times

"Thanks for the great ideas. After teaching ESL for 20 years, I've been laid off due to financial cuts in state education money. What a blow! Nevertheless, I'll still be involved, somehow, with students, so I always need all the ideas I can get! (renewal enclosed)

S.L., Coldwater, Michigan

Multi-level crossword puzzle:

In the courtroom



Word list:

attorney
crime
defendant
guilty
innocent
judge
jury
sentence
trial
witness

To the instructor:

Make copies of the blank puzzle for your students, with extra copies in case students wish to try doing more than one level. Then make copies of the clues, cutting them into sections.

Explain to the students that they can try the puzzle at three different levels, and let them choose which to try. (Note that for intermediate or advanced students, removing the *Word list* will make the puzzle even more challenging.)

Write about current events

Obviously, the puzzle will fit in with a discussion of current news events. After doing the puzzle as many times as they like, have the students work in small groups to write a description of a current trial in the news. Ask them to use each of the words on the word list in their paragraph.

Beginning level students can search a newspaper for each of the words on the *Word list*, circling the ones they find.

Discussion

Ask the students whether they feel it is a good idea to have TV cameras in the courtroom. Discuss the pros and cons of this issue.

Level A

Across clues

2. The person who did a crime may be found ___ in court.
6. The person accused of a crime is the ___.
7. A person is ___ if he or she is not guilty.
10. The ___ is a manager in the courtroom.

Down clues

1. A person who saw something happen is a ___.
3. A ___ can last just one day or for many months.
4. A $5000 fine or six months in jail are examples of a ___.
5. Another name for a lawyer is ___.
8. To do something against the law is a ___.
9. There are twelve people on a ___.

Level B

Across clues

2. "Did he do the crime?" "Yes, I'm sure he's ___."
6. "Do you believe the ___ is guilty?" "No, your Honor, we do not."
7. "No, I don't believe he did this crime. I think he is ___."
10. The ___ must make sure everything in the trial is legal.

Down clues

1. "Did you ___ the crime yourself?" "Yes, I saw everything."
3. "Do you believe that a ___ should be shown on TV?" "I'm not sure."
4. "If he is found guilty, what will his ___ be?" "Maybe life in prison."
5. The defendant's ___ usually speaks for him or her in court.
8. "Who was at the scene of the ___?" "Only two people were there when it happened."
9. The ___ must decide if the defendant is guilty or not.

Level C

Joyce Jones was accused of a (8 Down). The police said she stole a car. Ms. Jones denied it; she said that she was (7 Across). Her (3 Down) was held on July 30. Her (5 Down) told the court that she was in school at the time of the crime. A (1 Down) said that he saw her at school that night. The (10 Across) then asked the jury for their decision. The (9 Down) decided she was not (2 Across). Of course, because the (6 Across) was not guilty, she received no (4 Down) and was free to go home.

Tools & techniques:

Word-processor language activities

by **Aviva Furman**, ESL Instructor, South Seattle Community College, Seattle, Washington.

A low-tech solution

Many ESL instructors have access to a computer lab, but have no ESL software. This need not be a limitation. With a little creativity and a word processor, you can design your own computer exercises. These exercises will give your students confidence on the computer, help them develope some computer literacy skills, and reinforce the language skills they are learning in class.

The following activities require only the bare bones minimum in terms of hardware and software, can be adapted to all levels of students, and are great for pair work. I've been using them in a community college setting. The software I'm using is Microsoft Word for Windows, however, these activities can be adapted to any word processor and any hardware.

Scrambled sentences

A popular ESL activity is scrambled sentences: students are given index cards with words or phrases and must put the cards in the correct order to make a sentence. Teachers can easily convert a "scrambled sentences" activity into a computer activity using the word processing feature for moving text. As a computer activity, students will gain computer literacy while they are practicing grammar. In addition, teachers can save time and paper by putting this on the computer.

In the sample activity shown (next page, above) students see a screen with several words in boxes. Students move the words to the bottom of the screen to form a sentence. The method for moving text may depend on the word processor. In Microsoft Word for Windows, you move text by selecting it and then dragging it. With a little practice, students soon find that manipulation with the mouse is natural. Students enjoy the "magic" of seeing words jump from one part of the screen to another. Other word processors have different methods of performing "cut and past," but students can master each method relatively easily.

(Editor's note: Using this method, the computer won't 'tell' the students if their answer is correct—this should be checked by the teacher or by an answer key that you give to the students.)

Matching Sentence Halves

A related activity involves matching two halves of a sentence. In this example (see next page, below), the grammar point being practiced is forming tag questions. On the screen, students see statements in the left column of a table and tag questions in the right column. The student moves each tag question to follow the appropriate statement, completing the sentence.

Pair work

These activities adapt very well to pair work. In many computer labs there are not enough computers go go around, but this can be an advantage. Students enjoy working together on the computer, and the more computer literate students eagerly share their expertise with others. It is a great boost to their self-confidence to master the computer and be able to teach others.

Other activities

There is a wide range of activities that you can create which may focus on grammar, vocabulary, even pronunciation. You can emphasize other computer skills such as deleting characters, using tabs, using fonts and formatting characters. You can tailor activities to your students' levels of English proficiency and computer literacy. Such activities are a great alternative to typing practice and journal writing. In addition, they don't even require any new software!

Resources

For further ideas for introductory computer activities, see the book *Keystrokes to Literacy, Using Computers as Learning Tools for Adult Beginning Readers* by Antonia Stone, National Textbook Company, Toll-free 1-800-323-4900, fax 708-679-2494.

If you wish to purchase a disk from the author containing 30 computer exercises (IBM or compatible only) send $19.95 to: Aviva Furman, 10414 SW 112th St., Vashon, WA 98070. Please specify what word-processing software you have.

If you are interested in language teaching software, a good place to start is with *Athelstan*, an educational software distributor in Houston, Texas. Call 713-523-2837 or fax 713-523-6543.

You can create exercises like these with the software you already have!

Microsoft Word - TAGQUEST.DOC

File Edit View Insert Format Tools Table Window Help

Tag Questions

Instructions: Match the question on the right with the statement on the left. Use the mouse to move the tag question. Then answer the questions.

You speak English, don't you?	aren't you?
You're from Somalia,	haven't you?
Nobody was absent yesterday,	
You don't speak Spanish,	isn't it?
Seattle isn't the capital of Washington,	were they?
You have studied English for 3 years,	do you?
You have three sisters,	was it?
Using the computer is fun,	don't you?
This exercise wasn't difficult,	is it?

Microsoft Word - SCRAMB.DOC

File Edit View Insert Format Tools Table Window Help

Scrambled Sentences

Instructions: Make a sentence using these words. Use the mouse to drag the words to the correct position at the bottom of the page.

live

Laos

used

in

to

She					

Group work:

Practice with averages

Here's an activity developed by ***Pam Ingram****, from "Conversations in the Workplace: An ESL Activity Guide" and used here by permission.*

This activity uses student input to create a 'data base' for computations and averaging. To get the information, students interview each other, giving them practice in pronunciation, question formation, listening, speaking and writing.

The sample questions included here are about the workplace environment; if your class is not a workplace group you can easily rework the questions to suit your students. The level is appropriate for intermediate through advanced students, but lower level students could participate by, for example, taking responsibility for collecting information just on ages.

How to do it

First, the class practices the questions necessary to fill in the grid (see next page). Have the students form the questions orally before writing them on the board. The questions should look something like: *How old are you? How many years have you worked at ABC? How many brothers and sisters do you have?* and *How long does it take you to get to work?*

Next, students ask each other the questions and fill in the grid for everyone in the class. Encourage them to stand up and move around. (Note: in a multi-level class you may want to assign each student a separate question rather than having them ask every question.)

The teacher then assembles the group and asks them to help fill in her grid (on the blackboard or overhead), using questions like: *How long has Mannmey worked at the company?*

Once all the information is complete, the teacher uses the information from the grid to explain and demonstrate how to figure averages. If this is a new concept, you might want to demonstrate first with another example, such as length of time in the U.S. Students can then work out the answers to the 'Averages' questions in small groups (see p.10). Have them show their calculations on the worksheet.

Further practice

Other language areas to practice might include comparisons. From the information on the same grid, students could practice questions such as *Who is the oldest?* and *Who has worked at the company the longest?* Students could also write sentences such as: *Mannmey has worked here longer than Yee Won.*

An easy way to set up the comparisons exercise is to put two names on the board: *Rosa / Han*. Ask the students to write a comparison using the chart. Lower level students can compare one feature, such as: *Rosa is younger than Han*. More advanced students can compare two features, such as: *Rosa has worked here longer than Han but Han is older.*

Alternative questions

Be sure to design the questions with your students in mind. For example, in a school setting you could have "Months at this school" and "Time to get to school" as two of your categories.

Other possible questions, for this or for follow-up questionnaires, might include: Total years of education, number of years in home country, number of children, ages of children, number of hours spent in child care, number of jobs held in past, number of jobs held now, hours spent doing homework (for students in an academic setting), hours spent watching T.V., or hours children spend watching T.V.

Tutors, too

In a tutoring setting you can still do an averages lesson. If you have only one or two students, you'll have to devise questions about their family members or people they know well. If this isn't possible or appropriate, look around for some good interview possibilities. For example, if you meet in a library, what is the average number of hours the employees there work? The student could conduct a short survey to get their names and number of hours.

Follow-up

Look for a current events story in a newspaper or news magazine that discusses averages or shows a chart of averages, on a topic of interest to the students. Students can read or discuss this information, and perhaps decide where they fit in on the chart.

18
22
40
+ 54
134 / 4 =
33.5

Note: The Guide mentioned above is available for $16.90 from: Workplace Education Program, Emily Griffith Opportunity School, 1250 Welton St., Denver, CO 80204-2197.

Name	Age	Years at this company	Brothers and sisters	Time to get to work

Handout:

Practice with Averages

1. What is the average age in our class?

2. Who has been working at this company for the longest time?

3. Who has been working here for the shortest time?

3. What is the average length of employment (in months)?

4. What is the average number of siblings (brothers and sisters)?

5. Who has the shortest commute to work?

6. Who has the longest commute?

6. What is the average commute in our class?

Grammar grab-bag:

"How often does he need to eat?"

Practice with frequency expressions in the present tense.

At a pet store

You are interested in buying a kitten, but you have a lot of questions about how to take care of him. For example:

How often does he need to eat?
How often does he need to drink water?
How often does he need to go outside?
How often does he need to get exercise?
How often does he need to get shots?
How often does he need a checkup?
How often does he need to play?
How often does he need training?

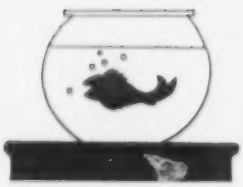
With a partner, imagine you are a customer in a pet store, and your partner is the pet store owner. Ask some questions about taking care of a kitten.

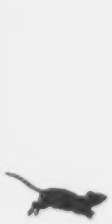
You and your partner can look at this chart while you are talking:

Customer	Pet store owner	
eat	every day	once a day (week, month, year)
drink		twice a day
go outside		three times a day
get exercise		four times a day, (etc.)
get shots		
get a checkup	never	
play		
get training		

Now, consider buying some of these other interesting pets. Ask some questions about how to take care of them.

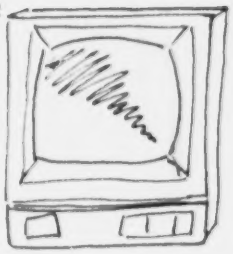
a snake
a dog
a monkey
a bird
fish
a turtle
a horse
a tiger
other: _____





Conversation:

An entertainment survey



Here are some questions about TV and videos. Ask another student these questions. Record the answers on this sheet. Then report the information to the rest of the class.

1. Do you watch TV?

2. How many hours per week do you watch TV?

3. What time of day do you watch TV? (morning, afternoon, evening, late night)

4. What kind of shows do you like to watch? (sports, news, soap operas, movies, drama, talk shows, sit-coms, music, or other)

5. What is your favorite show?

6. What kind of shows do you dislike?

7. What kind of ads do you enjoy watching?

8. What kind of ads do you dislike watching?

9. What would you like to change about TV? Why?

10. Do you watch videos?

11. What kind of videos do you like to watch?

12. Do you prefer TV or videos? Why?

Hands-on English

Guidelines for authors

Have you thought about sending in a teaching idea to share with our readers? We'd like to encourage you to do so! But, in case you are wondering what kind of requirements there may be, we include this info page for your information.

Don't be shy—give it a try!

Here are some questions that authors have asked us about contributing to this publication:

What kinds of articles is Hands-on English looking for?

We are looking for good, practical teaching ideas that are ready to use in the classroom or tutoring session. Our readers are interested in activities they can try out immediately—something that works.

Some suggested topics have included: workplace activities, current events, cross-cultural topics, grammar, games and pronunciation tips. Also, readers have requested multi-level activities, suggestions for one-on-one tutoring, pre-literacy level work, and anecdotes about students.

What level of students are using the materials?

Our readers are working with all levels of adult students, from pre-literacy through advanced, so we have a need for activities at many levels as well as multi-level.

The students have varying needs, and are learning in environments that include: refugee programs, adult education programs, community education, literacy programs, volunteer tutoring, secondary schools, community colleges, intensive ESL programs, colleges, language institutes, workplace programs, correctional facilities, religious organizations, libraries and resource centers.

What format do you prefer?

The best way to present your idea is in a step-by-step format. The explanation of the activity shouldn't take more than one page (about 650 words) but a worksheet or handout may also be attached.

What if I have just a small idea?

Hints and tips are very welcome—in fact, some readers like them best of all. If your teaching tip or activity can be explained briefly, so much the better!

Does the idea have to be original?

The idea for your activity can be your own original one, or it can be your own version or variation of someone else's idea—as long as the source is clearly stated.

How should the material be submitted?

We don't care very much. We have accepted articles written by hand on notebook paper, typed or printed out, mailed on diskette (any format), sent to us by e-mail, and even explained to us over the phone. If we can understand your idea, we'll work with it!

What if I'm not a very good writer?

Try to focus on presenting your idea clearly, just as you would explain it to a fellow teacher. If the writing needs tidying up we'll handle that (that's what we editors are for, after all!)

Do you need graphics?

If you have a photo to accompany your activity we would *love* to use it! (We can return it to you if you like.) Also any actual handouts you used are always interesting. Otherwise we will supply some drawings here and there to make the page visually interesting.

Who keeps the copyright?

We would like to request that you transfer the copyright to Hands-on English for your article. That makes it easy for us to publish it again in another format, such as in book form, some day. As author your name will *always* accompany the article, of course, in whatever format it appears.

If you have a special reason for retaining the copyright yourself—for example you are planning to publish a book of this material—we will be happy to accomodate you.

How do you decide whether or not to publish something?

Hands-on English is not a 'referreed' journal. Our decisions are made by the editorial staff. If we think the activity is something our readers will be interested in at this point, we may publish it.

Where do I send in my idea?

Send us a copy (be sure to keep one for yourself) at: Hands-on English, P.O. Box 256, Crete, NE 68333 USA.

Our toll-free number is 1-800-375-4263.
Fax number: 402-826-5426
E-mail: 73651.1122@compuserve.com

News & notes

Listening activities

A new volume of teaching ideas is now available from TESOL—this one is called "New Ways in Teaching Listening" and has 139 teaching activities revolving around listening skills at all levels.

The book is one of the "New Ways" series, which compiles teaching ideas from educators all over the world into a usuable format for classroom teachers.

To order, contact TESOL at 703-518-2522. ($24.95, ISBN 939791-58-7)

Hands-on hits the big time!

We're awfully proud to announce that we're now visible on the Internet's Worldwide Web! Browsers can read about the publication and order a free sample online. We hope to attract some more great folks like our current customers!

Thanks to Lisa Page of "Impact!" for organizing this for us. (See the address of the Virtual Catalog in the column below.)

Political non-update

We can't go into detail here about the state of U.S. legislation on adult education, because the laws for upcoming years are in the process of being hashed out in the Senate and House. We can suggest, however, that you do keep in touch with your federal and state legislators to remind them of the importance of adult education. Nagging will make a difference!

For the long term, the best thing you can do is invite elected officials to visit your classrooms and talk with your students. Establishing a relationship with legislators and making them aware of the reality of your students will pay off in the years to come.

Upcoming conferences

★ September 27-30, 1995—International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET). Annual conference in San Francisco, California. Contact IACET, 1200 19th St., Ste 300, Washington, DC 20036. Fax: 202-223-4579.

Online opportunities

The ESL Virtual Catalog is now up and running on the Worldwide Web. This site is your one-stop guide to the best resources for ESL and EFL teachers and students. The catalog will point you to discussion groups, mailing lists, and electronic publications for both teachers and students. It also links you to sites where you can download lesson plans and software, sign your class up for an international e-mail penpal project, and much more.

If you are interested in learning how to use the Internet in your class, **The ESL Virtual Catalog** is the best place to start! The address (URL) is:

http://www.prairienet.org/community/esl/homepage.html
(Note: there is no period at the end.)

Newsgroups, anyone?

Meg Gam in New York City reports that she is enjoying finding kindred souls online where she can talk about classroom issues. The newsgroup she enjoys the most is: misc.education.language.english

Another newsgroup she enjoys is more grammar oriented, and sometimes has little grammar tests in it that you can try with students. It is: alt.usage.english

Happy exploring!

Cost of language learning

In a local newspaper article about Czech immigrants (Nebraska is famous for them), we read how many of their children and grandchildren have not learned the Czech language, but speak only English.

The article cites an educational economist who estimated that it costs $100,000 in time and resources for an American student to become fluent in a foreign language.

"By the very fact that grandparents do not transmit the language to their grandchildren, they're stealing from them $100,000 in educational expenses that the kids could have gotten as a free present," she said. (Prof. Mila Saskova-Pierce, Slavic languages, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.) Now there's something to think about!

Advertising

Thanks to these advertisers for supporting ***Hands-on English!***

Get a *FREE* copy of *Impact!*

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To place a classified ad, send your notice of 30 words or less with US $10 (subscribers get a discount of 50%) to: Hands-on English, P.O. Box 256, Crete, NE 68333 USA. Fax/phone: (402) 826-5426. Toll free call-in 1-800-ESL- HAND.

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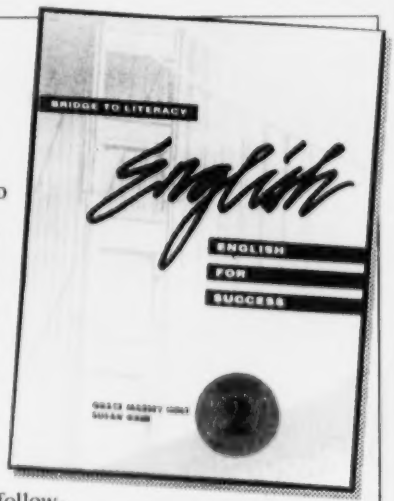
As reviewed in the May/June 1995 issue of *Hands-on English*

English for Success

Grace Massey Holt • Susan Gaer



The literacy components of *English for Success* are designed for adult students who do not read or write in their native languages, who have had little or no education in their native languages, or who are not familiar with the Roman alphabet. • Oral/aural skills are developed in conjunction with the literacy activities to provide students with the necessary tools to function effectively in real-life situations. • Basic procedures for the introduction of each unit and for the presentation of vocabulary, listening, pronunciation, grammar, communication, reading, writing, and interaction are provided for each unit. • Suggestions for recycling and reviewing sentence patterns are contained in follow-up activities throughout the text to ensure optimal practice and reinforcement. • An extensive and detailed *Teacher's Guide* accompanies each *Student Book*.

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EFS Student Book 2 • #0043-X / $9.95
EFS Teacher's Guide 1 • #0042-1 / $14.95
EFS Teacher's Guide 2 • #0044-8 / $14.95

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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

NIGHTSCHOOL
HERE YOU ARE, GIRLS—LOOKING FOR THIS? IT BOUNCED OVER HERE. HEY, I REALLY LIKED THOSE SPANISH SONGS YOU WERE SINGING!
THANK YOU VERY MUCH, SIR! I HOPE WE DIDN'T MAKE TOO MUCH NOISE!
NOT AT ALL! WELL—YOUR ENGLISH IS AS GOOD AS YOUR SPANISH!
WE LIKE ENGLISH! OUR SCHOOL HAS A BILINGUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM.
OH? SO YOU LEARN IN TWO AT ONCE?
DOESN'T THAT GET A LITTLE CONFUSING?
NOT AT ALL! AT FIRST WE HAD NEW LESSONS IN SPANISH, WITH LOTS OF ESL, TOO.
NOW WE CAN LEARN EVERYTHING IN ENGLISH, WE STILL HAVE SPANISH, AND WE GET GOOD GRADES!
THAT SOUNDS FANTASTIC! CAN I GO TO YOUR SCHOOL?
...SORRY — MY TEACHER SAYS THE FUNDING'S GOING TO BE CUT OFF.
BUT WHY?
SOME CONGRESSMAN SAYS IT'S UNAMERICAN FOR US TO LEARN IN OUR OWN LANGUAGE.
SINCE WHEN IS NOW SUCCESS UNAMERICAN? UNLESS, FOR WHO...
DON'T WORRY, MISTER — IT'S ONLY SCHOOL!
C'MON, I WANNA BE MICHAEL JORDAN THIS TIME!

Hands-on
English
A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult ESL
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July/August issue

Volume V, Number 3 September/October 1995

Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

Letters ..... page 3

Tools & techniques: Multi-level dictation on women's conference ..... page 4

Conversation: "Dance Card" ..... page 6

Hints & tips: ..... page 7

Culture essay: An Immigrant Experience ..... page 8

Group work: Choosing a restaurant ..... page 10

Online opportunities: ..... page 12

On the market: Review of "Puzzles Plus" ..... page 12

New & notes ..... page 14

Minigrants announcement: ..... page 16

Editorial:
Start a local ESL network

Quick! While there's still time! Before everybody gets too busy this fall, tired out and generally overwhelmed, start your own ESL support group!

Take advantage of a fresh start and a new semester. Call some friends, colleagues, fellow teachers and tutors; set up a time and place to meet every month. Decide what your focus will be—exchanging classroom ideas? Studying a book on teaching theory together? Finding solutions to a specific problem, such as grammar? Whatever it is, go for it!

We have talked to a number of people who have done this successfully. While it may seem like a major effort to add one more meeting to your schedule, it may be the best (maybe the only) way to guarantee your growth as a teacher and to find solutions to real classroom problems.

Isolation

If you feel isolated in your work, you're not alone—whether you teach in a small town in Arizona or a big city in Ohio, chances are you have little contact with other ESL teachers on a regular basis. This is partly because the population we teach is a minority, spread out geographically. And it is partly because our education system is not generally set up to encourage teacher collaboration.

Even in places where the institution is supportive and the administrators helpful, frequently an ESL teacher is a lone voice on behalf of the students. And it's hard to speak with much authority when you're the only one who understands!

The only way to overcome this isolation is through networking. Here are a few suggestions to help you get started:

- If possible, form a network of people *outside* your daily circle of contacts—maybe someone in a different program or a different town. You need fresh input, a fresh outlook.
- Choose a specific focus for your group so that you are doing something constructive together.
- Keep it uncomplicated at first. For example, six o'clock over dinner at Burger King would be a fine start.
- Avoid griping—it is a waste of your time.

How to meet people

What? You don't know anyone outside of your own program? There's an easy way to fix that—attend a local or regional TESOL conference. Don't be shy about introducing yourself to teachers you meet there. Here's a great opening line: "Is this your first conference?" Well, maybe it's not very original but it works. Teachers are usually dying to talk, and before you know it you'll be meeting all kinds of people.

Over the years we have met some wonderful people at conferences. One rule of thumb though—if you go with your friends, don't hang out with them. You'll be more outgoing and more approachable if you're by yourself.

Online buddies

If you have access to email, you have a great tool for networking, but it's still going to take some effort to find a supportive group that meets your needs. Don't give up, though—it's worth working on it.

Good luck, and let us know how it goes! We'll pass along any tips you have so that others can try them.

Hands-on English

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About the publication

Hands-on English is a small, independent publication that was started in 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who has taught ESL in many settings, including adult education programs, a refugee program, community college, and a university intensive English program. . . and survived to write about it!

Articles and ideas are contributed by experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have an article or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

About our Minigrants program

Hands-on English awards a few small grants (of $200 each) annually for practical classroom projects. Applications are due April 30, and are available upon request.

In case you didn't realize it, your editor (Anna Silliman) is truly outstanding in her field!!

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Letters

Retiring??

"...I am retired, but I volunteer with the Vietnamese Senior Association of Maryland, Associated Catholic Charities, Hoa Hao Buddhist Association, and the Cambodian Embassy."

–Harold Ames, Jr.
Washington, DC

For some people, the word "retire" does not mean "taking it easy!" Thank you for all of your work—it is much needed. Editor.

More, more!

"We thoroughly enjoy *Hands-on English*; we only wish it came out more often! Keep up the good work!

–Kathy Mulinazzi
"Small World," Lawrence, Kansas

A lot of people have asked us about publishing more issues. To tell you the truth, our dream would be to put out 10 issues a year, about the same size (16 pages) as we have now. People tell us they like the length of Hands-on, because it's not overwhelming. But having it come more frequently might be useful! Unfortunately, we can't do that until we've grown enough to afford some support staff. Some day! –Editor

Multi-level ideas?

"...I would like to see more ideas for teaching multi-level classes."

–Priscilla M. Wilson
Rye, New Hampshire

This is a frequent request, and we're working on it! Meanwhile, try the multi-level dictation we offer on page 4 of this issue. Does anyone out there have a multi-level activity they'd like to share with us? Thanks! –Editor.

Positive feedback

"Hands-on English is my favorite ESL publication. It truly represents its name. Each volume gets better and better."

–Rosemarie Guarracini
Lawrenceville, New Jersey

It's because of the high quality of subscribers we get. We couldn't do it without you! –Editor

Beginning students

"...I am back to teaching intermediate beginners after a 3 year classroom assignment of advanced students. I am feeling a little rusty. Can you offer some suggestions for some interesting lessons?"

–Irene Baydarian
Bayville, New York

Changing gears can be difficult at first. Have you tried the "One question interview" yet? This is a technique we learned from Fiona Armstrong in New York City (see Vol. II, No. 1 of Hands-on English). It's an activity that involves a lot of communication and can be tailored to your students.

Perhaps our readers can offer some more suggestions for working with beginners!

Disgruntled reader

"I will not renew, at least not now, till I see a change in attitude in the editor towards keeping the law in this country. Since you are *for* illegal immigration, you must be *for* breaking the law. Fortunately, for this nation, there is a growing number of ESL teacher that feel the same as I do."

–Vicki Buhler
Hanford, CA

I feel sure that there is a misunderstanding here. We are certainly not "for illegal immigration" and have never said so. Perhaps the reader has mistaken our strong sympathies for immigrants in general to mean something else?

Also, the reader is writing to us from California, where immigration issues have taken a strongly politicized and emotional turn—something those of us in the rest of the country can hardly understand, at least not yet. It would be nice if she could share with us what those concerns are—and I hope she does renew. –Editor

Tools & techniques:

Multi-level dictation

We present here another example of a multi-level dictation, a useful activity for your multi-level groups of students. (See Vol. III, No. 4 for a similar exercise on the topic of health care.)

Preparation

Dictations can be a very effective learning tool, but they are often most effective when the dictation is from material the students are already familiar with. The exercise then helps to reinforce and expand the students' language skills, rather than being just a guessing game.

For that reason, you may want to introduce the passage below in a previous session for reading and discussion. At the next meeting, try the dictation.

If you like, you can enlarge the worksheets on your photocopier first, to make it easier to write on them.

How to do it

Give each student a copy of the worksheet A, B or C—whichever level you think is most appropriate. Level A should work for beginners, B for intermediate, and C for more advanced students. A really advanced student could try the dictation with no help at all, or with a sheet of blanks only (use white-out on a copy of level C to prepare this, or make a page of 91 blanks!).

It might be interesting to let the students decide which level they would like to try. Some students might want to try the easiest one first, then try again with a more difficult one. Other students may prefer to challenge themselves and try the most difficult one first.

Have the students keep their worksheet face down in front of them. Before they turn over the sheet to look at it, have them listen while you read the passage at natural speed. Next, have them look at the page (not writing yet) while you read a second time, also at natural speed. These first two readings help the students to concentrate on the meaning of the passage before beginning to write.

On the third reading, they can start writing in the missing words as you read.

Pacing

It is best if you keep to a natural speaking speed, but leave longish pauses at natural breaking points, such as at the end of a sentence, for students to write. You can repeat the passage as many times as the students want you to, though.

Once the students are finished, they can help each other to correct their papers. (Try pairing advanced students with beginners for the correction, because each will have information the other needs!)

Adapting for your students

You can prepare a similar exercise on any topic for students. You'll find it is most successful, though, if you pick a paragraph the students have seen or read before—say, a text from last week's lesson. Having some familiarity with the content will give them a better chance of succeeding.

The text for dictation (8 sentences, 91 words):

Women from all over the world traveled to China recently for two important meetings. One meeting was the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. The other meeting was for the Non-governmental Organizations Forum on Women. This one was held near Beijing. In both meetings, participants talked about women's issues and women's rights. They talked about health care for women, family planning, abortion, violence, jobs, economics and politics. They didn't agree about all of these issues. But many people around the world want to improve the lives of women.

A

_____ from all over the world traveled to _____ recently for two important meetings. One meeting was the United Nations Fourth World Conference on _____ in Beijing. The other meeting was for the Nongovernmental Organizations Forum on _____ . This one was held near Beijing. In both meetings, participants talked about _____ 's issues and _____ 's rights. They _____ about health care for women, family planning, abortion, violence, jobs, economics and politics. They didn't _____ about all of these issues. But many _____ around the world want to improve the lives of _____ .

B

Women from all over the _____ _____ to China recently for two _____ meetings. One meeting _____ the United Nations Fourth _____ Conference on Women in Beijing. The other _____ was for the Nongovernmental Organizations Forum on Women. This one was held _____ Beijing. In both meetings, participants _____ _____ women's issues and women's _____ . They talked _____ health care for women, _____ planning, abortion, violence, _____ , economics and politics. They _____ agree about all of these issues. But many people _____ the world want to _____ the lives of women.

C

Women from _____ _____ the world _____ to China _____ for _____ important meetings. One meeting was the _____ Nations Fourth World _____ on Women in Beijing. The _____ meeting was for the Nongovernmental _____ Forum on Women. This _____ was _____ near Beijing. In _____ meetings, participants talked about _____ _____ and women's _____ . They talked _____ health care for women, family _____ , abortion, _____ , _____ , economics and politics. They didn't agree about _____ _____ _____ issues. But _____ _____ around the world _____ to improve _____ _____ of _____ .

Conversation activity:

Will you sign my card?

*by **Karen Sanders**, Anchorage Literacy Project, Anchorage, Alaska (adapted from Christine Seifert).*

Here is a unique and fun way to get your students into pairs for language activities!

"Dance Card"

This conversation activity can add some variety to your class. It allows students to talk with several different partners while practicing their conversation skills. **Dance Card** is most appropriate for intermediate to advanced level students. However, with some adjustment it can also be used in the lower levels. In fact, one nice thing about this activity is that the instructor has a large amount of control over the difficulty level.

Use this conversation activity as a warmup or as a time filler at the end of class. Because **Dance Card** involves movement, it is also a good change of pace activity.

What you need

Before class, come up with four or five general conversation topics suitable for your students. Some basic suggestions include topics on: home country, food, hobbies, politics, family, life in your city.

Prepare enough copies of the 'Dance Cards' to provide every student in the class with one. It may also be helpful to have a stopwatch or clock.

How to do it

Stage One:

- Give each student in the class a personal copy of the Dance Card.
- Ask each student to find a partner.
- Instruct the students to sign their name to *their partner's* Card.
- Have the students reclaim their own Cards.
- Repeat this procedure with a second partner.
- Repeat the procedure with a third partner.
- Each student should now have three different names on his or her personal Dance Card.

Stage Two:

- Instruct the students to sit with partner #1.
- Give one of the prepared conversation topics, and tell the students that they will have three minutes to discuss this topic with their partner.
- After three minutes say 'STOP.'
- Instruct the students to get up and move so they are sitting with partner #2.
- Give a second conversation topic and once again give the students three minutes to discuss it.
- Repeat on final time with partner #3.

Comments

With beginners it may be helpful to change partners but keep the same topic each time.

Be sure to keep the discussion time per question short. The students feel very successful if they are able to complete the activity speaking only English!

Finally, most students find an explanation of the Dance Cards' historical use interesting. Usually when they realize they will only have to talk and not dance there are loud sighs of relief!

Dance Card

1.

2.

3.

Dance Card

1.

2.

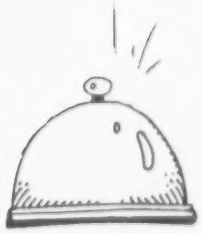
3.

Hints & tips

At the sound of the bell...

Linda Phipps in Midwest City, Oklahoma, phoned in this pronunciation tip in response to another reader's question about Spanish speakers adding an extra 'e' sound to the beginning of words. Linda's Asian students typically drop the final 's' at the end of words, and she's found a non-verbal way to remind them of this error.

Have a small bell, like the ones you see in stores labelled "ring for service" sitting within reach during class. Whenever a student makes the typical error (in this case dropping the final 's'), the teacher rings the bell. This makes the students aware of the error so they can correct themselves, but has the advantage of not interrupting the flow of the speaking very much. Within a few weeks, students will stop making this error.



Linda warns, though, that this technique has the potential to be extremely embarrassing for some students. She always asks the students to vote on whether to use this technique or not, using secret ballots. If even one student objects, she doesn't use the bell.

Five up!

Marge Morchower in Syracuse, New York uses this activity as a fun 10-minute filler or as a way to review certain grammar structures.

Five students stand up in front of the class. The first student makes a statement, for example about something he or she does every day: "I usually cook dinner every day." The next student has to negate that statement and make a new one. For example: "I don't cook dinner every day, but I always do my homework in the evening." The third student negates that statement ("I don't do my homework in the evening") and then adds a new one. This continues until all five students have spoken.

Finally, the teacher calls on the students in the audience to challenge them to remember who said what. For example, "He cooks dinner every night." This sounds pretty simple but actually involves a lot of grammar practice!

You could use this technique to practice past tense structures as well. For *really* advanced students, they could practice reported speech this way. (ie. "He says that he doesn't cook dinner every night."

Marge says her students enjoy this activity —it is fast-paced and interesting as well as testing your memory skills.

The Human Computer™—modernized

A technique that is well-known to some teachers, called the Human Computer™, was originated by Dr. C.A. Curran and developed by Counseling-Learning Associates. This technique, in which the teacher repeats whatever the students indicate, is very useful for pronunciation practice.

Typically, a student raises his or hand, or taps the teacher on the hand to signal the start of the "computer operation." The teacher then repeats the phrase or sentence after the student (correctly, of course), as many times as the student wishes.

A teacher here in our new home town of Crete, Nebraska, found the hand waving and tapping not suitable for her or her students. So, she gave the students a small box to use as a remote control! Now they can take turns practicing their pronunciation by passing the "remote" around the room.

Do you have a tip that works for you? Why not share it with our readers? Teachers and tutors are always looking for new ideas!

Culture:

An Immigrant Experience

by ***Tzymei Alexasia Shih***

Imagine waking up one day, and all of a sudden, the world around you is speaking Latin. All of a sudden, you are the only person without blue skin and green hair. All of your friends are now on another continent, or essentially, another world. Your parents, too, are on another continent. They thought that being in this new country would give you more opportunities in the future, but they must take care of business back home in order to support you here.You were an A student in math before, but today, you realize that your math book is written in Latin. You see the numbers, but you do not understand what the direction is telling you to do. You cannot read any of the story problems, despite the fact that you recognize the numbers. You were once an A student in English, but now you are in a class where Latin is used. You knew how to express yourself before, and you want to be understood, but you do not have the language ability to do that. All of a sudden, you are illiterate. You cannot read, you cannot write, and you only have enough language to communicate the simplest idea.

In your science class, you know the answer to a question, but you keep quiet because you are afraid that people may laugh at you if you cannot express the idea in perfect Latin. And what if your answer is wrong? After all, this is a different country, and they do things differently. You were once the top basketball player in your school, but now the whole class is twirling hourglass shaped objects on a rope, passing them from one person to another. You have never played it before, and you keep on dropping the object. One of your teammates gets tired of having to stop the game constantly and tells you that you don't know how to do anything. You just want to be invisible. You dread any team activities because you fear that you would cause the team their chance at achieving their goal successfully.

You go from class to class, not knowing anyone in the hallway, trying to sit in the back so you are not called on. You know the teachers will never get to know you from seeing you for 45 minutes a day. "Just as well," you think, "what will I have to say to them anyway? And what will they have to say to me?"

You go to lunch. You cannot read the menu of the day. You see people walking past you, carrying some delicious looking things from the cafeteria, but you don't know how to ask them the name of the food. You feel shy and embarrassed, and everyone seems so eager to just go and eat lunch. No one seems to have time for you. You are afraid that if you ask questions at the window, the rest of the line would get impatient and be upset with you. So you ask for, say, "ramen," because that is the only food you know. And that is the only food you eat for the next month. So you decide to bring your own lunch. Unfortunately, no one has ever seen a hamburger before. They think that eating raw lettuce is barbaric. They only eat their tomatoes when they are green, peeled, and cooked. They think that the mustard and the sauce you put on the burger looks like bird dropping and vomit, so your delicious hamburger lunch is now the talk of the town because it is different. Of course, there is always that one kid who says "EWWWW that is so GROSS!" And from that day on you either hide and eat your lunch or you go back to eating the cafeteria ramen.

You feel alone. Your parents want you to succeed in school. They know you are a good student, but all of a sudden you are not passing your classes, and you have no social life. They come visit you once every three to six months, and you must stay with a guardian/uncle/aunt/ friend of the family. You know your parents are going through some rough times, and they care a lot for you, but you wish they could be here with you and support you HERE and not over an overseas phone call. People have always said that kids can pick up languages faster, so you are expected to do well in three months. You know your parents have placed their hope in you, and what you are not achieving is not what they want to hear. The pressure is on. You feel that no one understands you. There is no one to talk to. You begin to wonder about your own culture, because you want to fit in. You begin wondering about yourself and whether there is something wrong with you for not being able to succeed academically and make friends.

Deep down you want to go back to be with your old friends, to speak a language you are familiar with, but your parents tell you that this is the best for you, and there

We are very pleased to share with you this article by Alex Shih, PhD candidate and former public school teacher in Claremont, California. It is written partly from personal experience, and partly from observations of students. Because of its powerful impact, the article has been used for teacher education on multicultural issues.

Alex told us "It would be great if more people can benefit their students from using the article, whether as a writing prompt, or simply to gain a better understanding of what the students go through."

is no turning back.All your teachers and classmates at school have heard that people who speak English are naturally good at biology and are also outspoken, but do not do too well when it comes to math. It so happens that you love photography and hate biology; you are the quiet type, and you love math. So suddenly you are labeled as not trying hard enough, lazy, and not participating in classroom activities, when in fact you are trying your best. And people think you let someone do your math homework for you, or you must have a tutor at home so you are doing so well, when in fact you have done all the work by staying up using a Latin dictionary until midnight every night. It did not matter. The stereotype has set in so deeply, one contradicting example will not make a difference.

One day, you see another English speaking student who looks "like you." When you speak to each other, you think it is probably the most beautiful language you have ever heard in months. You are so happy that you hang around with this person all the time, sharing your thoughts, problems, and sharing everything that you have been bottling up inside that you could not tell anyone, because you feel that no one is interested, no one has time, and no one would have the patience to listen to your broken Latin and try to understand you.

But all of a sudden, you see kids walking by you and your friend, making funny sounds as if they are trying to speak English. You know they are not comfortable with you speaking another language around them, but you are not about to stop, because this is the only way you can communicate your thoughts, and you finally have someone to share them with. Later, you find you have little in common with this new friend except the language and the immigrant experience. You grow apart emotionally, but you feel the need to be around someone who understands, even if all you have in common is the language.

You wish so hard that someone would reach out to you and make friends with you. You really want to make friends, but you are intimidated and feel that since you are new to the culture, you don't know the latest cool stuff to talk about. You wish so hard that someone would look beyond the skin color, the language barrier, and see that you are a human being just like they are. You have feelings, you have pride,and you have a self-esteem that is slowly crumbling. You have two ears that hear hurtful comments, you have two eyes that cry salty tears, and you have a heart that bleeds red blood, just like everyone else. You can think, you can talk, and you need friendship just like anyone else, no matter in what language. You wish so hard one day people would stop using the stereotyping from movies to judge you, and that one day people would get to know you and treat you like an individual. You wish so hard that every time you make a cultural blunder, like forgetting to turn the cup around three times before you take a sip of water, that people would not generalize and say "Oh, all the people from that country are like that. They have no manners."

You want to make friends with these people, but they seem to dislike you because you are different. You wish so hard that someone would come to you and ask you questions, and be interested in what you have to say, even if it is just "What classes are you taking this trimester?" You wish people would keep an open mind when they are just beginning to get to know you. It would make you so happy, and you will try your darndest to speak Latin so they can understand. You wish people would ask you to help them with developing pictures in photography, to show them how to do something you are very good at. You want to reach out, but all the cultural blunders have intimidated you.

You need a friendly hand from "the other side" to invite you in, and be patient with you, and teach you the culture that you are so unfamiliar with, yet be interested and respect your unique background. But all things aside, you need someone who appreciates you for who you are, someone who appreciates your differences and what you can offer, and realizes that people, despite the language and appearance differences, have more in common as a human species than they are different.

Group work:
Going out together

by ***Magali Duignan****, Continuing Education Program, Augusta College, Georgia.*

In this well-planned activity, each pair of students learns as much as possible about one restaurant. Then as a group all the students compare restaurants and decide which one they should go to for a dinner together!

Goal

This activity provides adult ESL students of low-intermediate proficiency with a group experience that uses reading to promote communication in a small group and encourages contact with the community.

A problem-solving exercise

Decision-making, negotiating, and persuading are some of the communication skills necessary in human interaction. However, when such interaction takes place in a second or foreign language, some adult learners may have difficulty because they lack language skills or because of the different rules of discourse which operate in both the native and target languages. With this in mind, I devised a problem-solving exercise which encourages decision making and negotiation, and helps strengthen persuasive skills.

Materials needed

You will need: newspaper ads of some local restaurants (one for each pair of students), a list of questions for students to work on, a map of the region, and permission from the school to use the telephone.

How to do it

I started by presenting students with the task of choosing a restaurant where we, as a group, would celebrate the last day of our classes. Next, we moved to a discussion of what factors we should consider in selecting a restaurant. The students established that price, quality, ingredients of the dishes, and especially location were important because most of them were recent arrivals and knew very little about their surroundings and driving. Students were from Puerto Rico, Somalia, the Netherlands, Uruguay, France, Korea, and Mexico.

I organized them in pairs; I tried to pair students who spoke different native languages. Each pair of students was given one folded task sheet which contained a newspaper ad on one side and a few scanning questions based on the ad on the other (see next page). Next, students were given approximately fifteen minutes to read the texts and locate the answers to the questions. They were encouraged to jot down their answers in note form to help them remember what they had read, and to help them in presenting their findings to the entire group. Armed with paper, pencil, and a map, students were also allowed to use the school phone to call the local restaurants to find out more about which ones accepted reservations and to ask for specific directions.

Which restaurant?

Once the pairs of students compiled the answers to all their questions, each pair presented its findings to the whole group. This time students wrote down the information their classmates were reporting on the second task sheet (see next page, below). This section of the exercise allowed students to practice some of the communicative functions that had been taught to the class, such as interrupting, asking for others to repeat, and thanking. I wrote their answers on a transparency, and I later projected it for us to compare our notes. Finally, based on the information gathered, we made our choices.

Negotiating

It was very rewarding to see the students engaged in the persuading phase of the exercise. As they compared and contrasted restaurants, they had to negotiate meaning. I noticed that although most of the students made accurate use of sentence formulas during the "persuading-others" phase, those who were clearly less fluent in English tended to raise their voices as a means of asserting their opinions. Some students were very cooperative and willing to "translate" what these less proficient learners were trying to convey.

As a follow-up activity, we went to the Mexican restaurant the students had selected and had a good time.

A sample student card:

Answer the following questions briefly

1. What type of restaurant is this?
2. Where is it located?
3. What time does it open?
4. Is it open every day?
5. Can you name a few dishes we could eat there?
6. What is the telephone number?
7. Do we need to make reservations?
8. Are major credit cards accepted?
9. Do you think it is an expensive restaurant?
10. Discuss with your partner why we should go to this restaurant (Try to think of three reasons).
11. Discuss with your partner why we should *not* go to this restaurant (Try to think of three reasons).

Which restaurant?

Name of restaurant	Location	Time/Day	Credit Cards?	Price per person

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Resources:

Online opportunities

Our intrepid Internet explorer, Meg Gam, once again shares with us some of her latest electronic discoveries. (In 'real' life, Meg is an ESL teacher in New York City.)

Student discussion groups

For folks who have classroom email access to Internet, or whose students have access to Internet and want to practice English via participation in mailing lists, there are nine (9) different ESL/EFL student-oriented subject-related mailing lists. To get a list of these lists, send a blank message to:

announce-sl@latrobe.edu.au

Idiom worksheets by gopher

An interesting GOPHER address is available at: gopher.comenius.com This gopher features a "Weekly Idiom" worksheet, as well as a periodic folktale with related worksheets. The material can be printed off, downloaded. There is also an option for getting answers to the questions on the worksheets.

Language software

If you have access to the World Wide Web, check out the University of Sussex Virtual CALL Library ("CALL" means computer-assisted language learning). When I was there it had some interesting things to do and some nice links to other resources. The address:

http://www.sussex.ac.uk/lanc/welcome.html

Low-tech high tech

Well, what if you only have an email account and can't access all those neat newsgroups, gopher and World Wide Web addresses? There is a way! You can get info on how to access newsgroups, gopher, FTP and WWW *via email* by sending a message to: listserv@ubvm.cc.buffalo.edu

In the body of the message write GET INTERNET BY-EMAIL NETTRAIN F=MAIL

More to come...

Next month: Who is CELIA, and why should we be friends?

Editor's note: The **ESL Virtual Catalog** on the Worldwide Web, which includes a page for Hands-on English (!!), has a new address. Check it out at:

http://www.pvp.com/esl.htm

On the market

Reviews of useful ESL materials

We received the following correspondence from ***Teresa Falagrady*** *in Denver, Colorado, and thought we should pass it along to you:*

"While I was cleaning out some drawers recently, I came across an ESL resource that you may or may not be familiar with: *Puzzles Plus* by Emma Iulo, published by New Readers Press. There are three volumes, 48 pages each. Each booklet consists entirely of puzzles, mostly crossword. Here are some examples:

'Change a Letter'—Change one letter of the underlined clue word and you'll have the answer: *I wish you were going _____ us.* (Answer: *with*)

'Lookin' Good'—Most answers have the 'oo' sound (as in hood, push and could): *12 inches = _____* (Answer: *foot*)

'Write it Right'—The answers sound the same as the underlined word in the clue, but they are spelled differently: *We _____ dinner at eight o'clock last night.* (Answer: *ate*)

There are approximately 45 puzzles in each booklet, and they're perfect for ESL students of all levels—great learning tools for sound practice, vocabulary building, spelling, idioms, etc."

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News & notes

Upcoming conferences

(If you need more information about any of these conferences, don't hesitate to call us.)

♦ September 29-30—**Carolina TESOL** in Boone, North Carolina.

♦ October 7—**Texas TESOL IV** in Houston, Texas.

♦ October 12-15—**Mexico TESOL** in Acapulco, Mexico.

♦ October 13-16—**Texas TESOL V** in Plano, Texas.

♦ October 14—**Michigan TESOL** in Ypsilanti, Michigan.

♦ October 18-21—**Literacy Volunteers of America (LVA)** in Buffalo, New York.

♦ October 20-21—**Florida TESOL** in Kendall, Florida.

♦ October 20-22—**New York State TESOL** in New York, New York.

♦ October 20-22—**Minnesota TESOL** in St. Paul, Minnesota.

♦ October 21—**Massachusetts TESOL** in Springfield, Massachusetts.

♦ October 21—**California TESOL** in San Diego, California.

♦ October 25-28—**Southeast Regional TESOL** in Memphis, Tennessee.

♦ October 27-28—**Mid America TESOL** in Cedar Falls, Iowa.

♦ October 28—**Baltimore Area TESOL** in Baltimore, Maryland.

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Going to a conference? We'll be happy to send you a few samples to take along with you to show other ESL instructors.

Or, if you have some space on a display table, we can also send you a small stand-up sign that says "Sign up here for a free sample issue" with a sign-up sheet. Then we can mail your colleagues their sample after the conference.

Classified ads

To place a classified ad, send your notice of 30 words or less with US $10 (subscribers get a discount of 50%) to: Hands-on English, P.O. Box 256, Crete, NE 68333 USA. Fax: 402-826-3997. Phone: 402-826-5426. Toll free call-in 1-800-ESL-HAND.

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Back issues of *Hands-on English* are still available at US $4 per copy (this includes shipping costs).

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Minigrants announcement:

Hands-on English awarded 5 small grants to ESL teachers in August. These awards will help the instructors to develop a classroom project.

The winning projects were selected on the basis of their practical benefit to the needs of the students. The recipients of the awards were:

Jenny Howard of the Portage County Literacy Council, Stevens Point, Wisconsin, for a literacy quilt project.

Kristin Kucia-Stauder of the Boone County Adult Learning Center, Florence, Kentucky, to involve the students in designing a brochure about their ESL program.

Clifford Lee of the Asian Friendship School, Kensington Joint Action Council, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania for an oral history project.

Katherine Lucas of the Arlington Education and Employment Program (REEP), Arlington, Virginia. Her students will work together to develop a map of their community.

Dianne E. Scott of the Metro-Nashville Adult Basic Education Program, Nashville, Tennessee, for a project using student-written dialogues as learning material.

When the projects are completed, *Hands-on English* will report on the results so that other teachers may benefit from these ideas.

Applications for next year's Mini-grants and complete information on how to apply are now available upon request from *Hands-on English*. The deadline for application is April 30, 1996. The awards committee will be looking for innovative teaching ideas that address the needs often felt by adult students.

The Hands-on English mission:

"...to encourage and assist teachers and tutors of ESL in a practical way, and to promote the development of second language teaching for adult students!"

Hands-on **English**

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult ESL

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September/October issue

Volume V, Number 4 November/December 1995

Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

Letters
.....page 3

Minigrants award winner:
'Elders of the World' cookbook
.....page 4

Grammar grab-bag:
Using *don't* and *doesn't*
.....page 6

Vocabulary:
Words and phrases for danger
.....page 7

Crossword puzzle:
Buying a car
.....page 8

Conversation activities:
Interviews galore!
.....page 10

On the market:
Review of "Grammarchants"
.....page 12

Online opportunities:
About CELIA
.....page 13

News & notes
.....page 14

Idea file:
A 10-minute reading activity
.....page 16

Editorial:

Watching the pros

Recently a TV special on Julie Andrews gave a retrospective of her career starting from her childhood, which she spent travelling with her parents on the vaudeville circuit. Usually movie stars don't fascinate me, but in this case it was extremely interesting to hear Ms. Andrews herself talk about where she learned her stage presence and techniques.

She never had formal training, she said, but learned from the hours and hours of watching the wonderful comedians, dancers and actors in the vaudeville acts where they travelled. As a young singer she was able to observe techniques that worked, see how audiences reacted, and pick up the little nuances that make a difference.

Watching good talent helps you to learn. As a performer, Ms. Andrews said, she has a lifetime of ideas; details added up in her memory—some even unconscious—that she can draw on whenever they are needed. This made me think that real pros learn their craft by watching the pros.

Can ESL teaching techniques also be learned in this way? In my own case, I studied German for many years and had the good fortune to be exposed to some gifted language teachers, whose classroom manner and techniques are indelibly imprinted on my mind. I am sure that this had an effect on my ESL teaching. As a graduate student and part-time teacher in New York, I had wonderful opportunities to observe teachers and learn from them. Like Julie Andrews, I feel I have a storehouse of knowledge to draw from.

You can learn a lot from observing teachers, and you don't even have to travel to New York to do it. One evening I was walking down the hallway of an ordinary high school in an ordinary city, and heard an ordinary adult ESL teacher giving an ordinary lesson (something about time). Glancing up, I suddenly noticed that the students' attention was riveted to the teacher; the excitement level was very high. Curious, I hung around trying to see what was going on. Something magical was happening. I finally had to move along in order not to disturb the class, but I carried with me the memory of that moment and thought about it for a long time.

I began experimenting a little bit to see if I could generate that level of energy in my own classroom, and found a whole new level of fun opening up for me and my students. We could all learn more about teaching by watching each other teach. Unfortunately, except for prowling the hallways there isn't usually much occasion to do so.

The simplest way to see some ESL teaching would be to ask a colleague if you can sit in on his or her class. If you can arrange this, great! Team teaching situations can also provide you with opportunities to observe teaching. If your program allows for this kind of work, try to take advantage of it. Finally, another good way to observe teaching (and learning) is to become a student yourself, by enrolling in a foreign language course.

Some advice

When visiting a class, keep in mind that while what the teacher says and does is certainly interesting (especially to a fellow teacher), the key to understanding what is going on in a classroom is how the students are responding. Are they interested, thinking, involved in some way? It is really from their responses that we learn what good teaching is.

Hands-on
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November/December 1995

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Permission to photocopy: This periodical is copyrighted. However, we invite teachers and tutors with a paid subscription (or whose institution has a paid subscription) to make as many copies as they need for their own classroom use. (Please don't make copies for colleagues! We depend on subscription income.)

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About the publication

Hands-on English is a small, independent publication that was started in 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who has taught ESL in many settings, including adult education programs, a refugee program, community college, and a university intensive English program. . . and survived to write about it!

Articles and ideas are contributed by experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have an article or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

About our Minigrants program

Hands-on English awards a few small grants (of $200 each) annually for practical classroom projects. Applications are due April 30, and are available upon request.

The editor was not available for this issue's photo, as she was busy scrubbing the Vick's Vapo-Rub off of her computer keys. Better luck next time!

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Letters

Renewing again

"Hands-on is still its great old self! All of the teachers in my program continue to ask each other "Did you get your new issue yet?" I especially like the multi-level units, and the idea of more literacy focused lessons."

—Kathy Hull, Tarrytown, NY

We try to include multi-level activities whenever we can but there is always more demand for them. Does anyone have a multi-level activity they'd like to share with our readers? Thanks.

2-year subscriptions

"Thanks for the convenience of a 2-year subscription, and for Hands-on English."

—Joann-Marie Pittman, Babylon, NY

We have started offering this option at the request of some of our readers, and it is working out very well. About one quarter of our renewals are taking advantage of the 2-year option.

Another casualty

"Keep up the good work. This year I've been laid off from my two part-time ESL teaching jobs. I hope this publication brings me good luck in getting an ESL job where I can successfully use the contents of Hands-on English."

—Sharon Borakove, Brooklyn, NY

We're sorry to hear you've been laid off! Hands-on English has been hearing from more and more people who are laid off, "downsized," or transferred to other programs, so you're not alone, unfortunately. It seems that funding changes are already having an impact on teachers we know, and their students.

Ideas for big classes?

Hands-on English has received a wealth of material about dealing with large classes, and we plan to bring you an article on this topic in our January/February issue. If you have experiences, ideas, activities, (or even a photo of your class) that you'd like to share, we'd love to hear from you.

Workplace ESL

"I am teaching a group of semi-literate and low literacy hispanics in a company. I haven't done this type of teaching in a long time and your tips and hints have been especially useful.

"In fact, I can adapt most low level lessons to workplace by substituting the vocabulary and functions of their everyday work world. I was surprised to see that most of them did not know each other's full names, but now they can introduce their co-workers very comfortably and say something job-related or work schedule-related about themselves and their co-worker."

—Kathy Burkhead, via email

We agree that many ESL language learning techniques can be easily adapted to workplace literacy programs. There may also be some unique aspects to teaching in this environment, and many readers have asked about this.

We are accumulating a resource list of persons willing to network or consult about workplace ESL. If you would like your name added to this list, please contact the Hands-on English office.

(Hand-made paper cutting contributed by Mrs. Jun Kong of the People's Republic of China.)

Minigrants award winner:

'Elders of the World' cookbook project

—by **Barbara Fish**, ESL Coordinator at Literacy Volunteers of America (LVA) Wasatch Front, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Editor's note: This project is a wonderful example of using what your students already know, where they are already experts, to create a basis for a language-learning activity.

Diverse seniors

'Elders of the World' is a group of ESL students and tutors, most of whom are senior citizens. They meet weekly for an hour or more each week at the LVA Center in Salt Lake City. The group is led by Carol Janiga, a tutor with special interest in seniors. Six other tutors, all seniors, help tutor as and when their schedules permit.

Most of the students are refugees from the former Soviet Union; two are Spanish speakers, and one is from Vietnam. About half of the students have very limited English and the rest are advanced beginners and intermediates.

The project came about because two or three members of the group frequently brought home-made pastries, cakes, and cookies to share. We realized there was a wealth of ethnic recipes that we could use not just to teach English but to foster an appreciation of the differences and similarities within our group.

Working together

As we went along with the project, it became clear that not all members of the group wished to demonstrate a recipe or present one. Everyone, however, participated in the hands-on sessions and enjoyed sampling the results. The liveliest discussions arose when eliciting precise amounts and exact ingredients for the Russian recipes. It seems that there are as many variations of recipes as there are families in the Community of Independent States.

After each cooking demonstration there was a follow-up session on the vocabulary and phrases that had been used. Tutor Virginia Wells taught a dialogue singing to the tune of "Frere Jacques" e.g. "we are stirring" and "we are mixing".

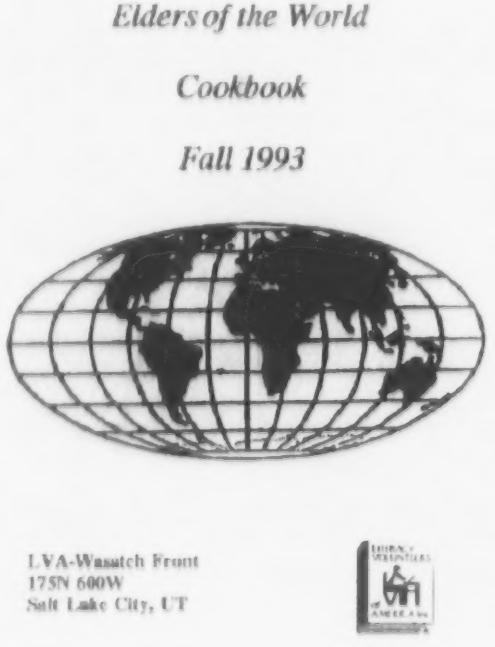
Two of our Russian-speaking members were so enthusiastic, they brought us a complete meal from borscht to coffee cake. A truly memorable occasion.

Celebration

The culmination of our project will be the presentation of the cookbooks to all the participants at our LVA Holiday Party, where the group will be formally recognized for their achievements.

Although we have told them that we will provide the food for the party, we have no doubts that we will be overwhelmed once again with delicious ethnic treats.

We would like to express our thanks to "Hands on English" for the grant which made this wonderful experience possible.



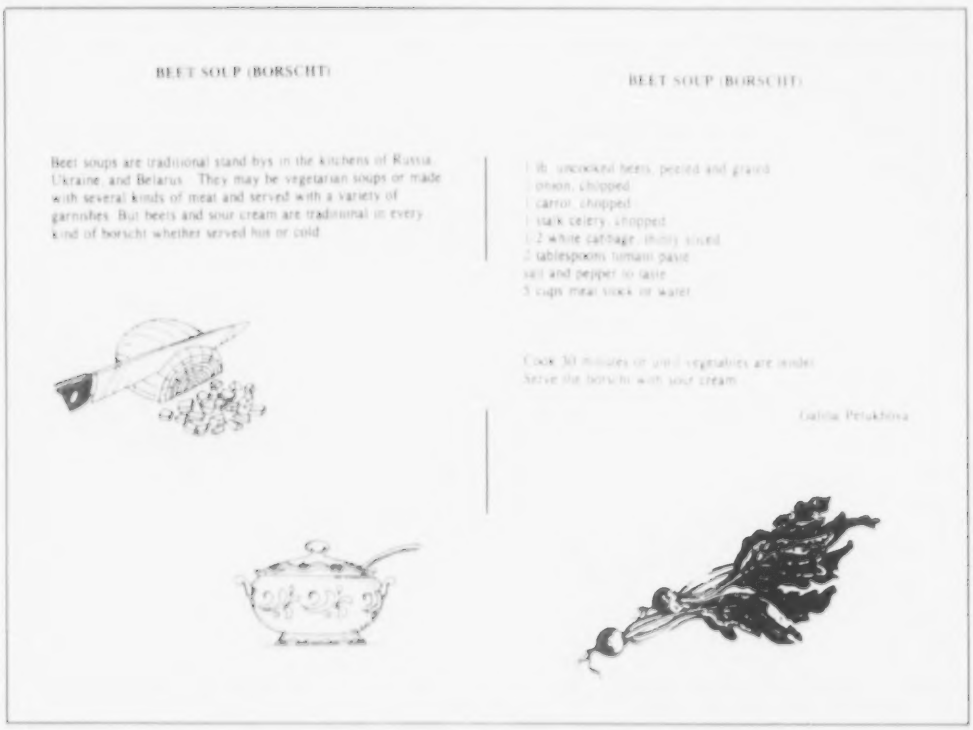
From the introduction to the cookbook:

"Elders of the World" is a group of ESL tutors and students who are (or almost are) senior citizens. This group meets weekly for conversational English at the LVA-WF center.

"The cookbook project grew out of the interest of two or three group members who regularly brought dishes to share. Getting the exact recipes in English, however, proved a challenge owing to the language barriers and to the fact that many recipes vary according to the cook's preferences and to the ingredients available at any one time.

"Lively discussions arose frequently among our Russian-speaking members who represented several different republics, each of which seemed to have several different variations of well-known dishes. We have tried to communicate options in those recipes."

Members of the 'Elders' group, discussing strategy.



BEET SOUP (BORSCHT)

Beet soups are traditional stand-bys in the kitchens of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. They may be vegetarian soups or made with several kinds of meat and served with a variety of garnishes. But beets and sour cream are traditional in every kind of borscht whether served hot or cold.

BEET SOUP (BORSCHT)

1 lb. uncooked beets, peeled and grated
1 onion, chopped
1 carrot, chopped
1 stalk celery, chopped
1/2 white cabbage, thinly sliced
2 tablespoons tomato paste
salt and pepper to taste
5 cups meat stock or water

Cook 30 minutes or until vegetables are tender.
Serve the borscht with sour cream.

Galina Peliukhova

A page from the final product—a combined cookbook of the students' recipes.

Grammar grab-bag:

Do or don't? Does or doesn't?

—by **Jim Ford**, adult ESL teacher, Binghamton, New York.

Editor's note: It always warms my heart when teachers send us a well-crafted exercise designed for their students. We think you'll find this one useful. Notice that in order to fill in the blanks, students not only need to know the correct forms but they also have to understand the meaning of the sentence. (Also note that #6 is an idiom.)

Who benefits

Beginners through intermediates can benefit most from this activity. However, you might use it with advanced students, too—sometimes reviewing simpler forms they learned a year or two ago is very important for them.

Warm-up

Your students should already be somewhat familiar with these forms. If they are not, try some very simple examples first like asking everybody in the room if they like coffee (or not). Students will answer "Yes, I do" or "No, I don't." Then, do a memory check to see if the students remembered these answers, by asking, "Does Van like coffee?" Students will answer "Yes, he does" or "No, he doesn't."

How to do it

After giving students a little warm-up practice with these forms, hand out the worksheet. Intermediate or advanced students can try working on it individually. For high beginners or low intermediate, it might be better to work in pairs. Tell students the activity is a little easier if they read each sentence aloud to each other first.

Once the students are satisfied with their answers, you can check them in one of the following ways:

- Have students give correct answers orally while you write them on the overhead.
- Have students volunteer to write the correct sentences on the board, then read them aloud so everyone can check their own answers.

Follow-up

Depending on whether your students need more review with these forms, you could write some more sentences using examples about the students themselves. For example: "Van comes from Vietnam but Maria _____." Your students will appreciate the personalized lesson!

Use: do, don't, does or doesn't

1. Tom likes to drink coffee, but his wife _____.
2. I don't play basketball very well, but my son _____.
3. They _____ their shopping at X Mart, but we _____.
4. She _____ mind if you borrow her car. Use it whenever you like.
5. Bill _____ his laundry on Saturday mornings.
6. Easy _____ it!
7. He always _____ a good job, _____ he?
8. We _____ have any time to waste! We have to leave right now!
9. You always _____ it right. Good job!
10. _____ tell me you can't _____ it. I know you can!

"I don't like to dance, but my wife does."

Vocabulary:

Danger zone!

by **Janet Hervieux**, Pensacola, Florida.

Here is a list of very important words and phrases. I use this list with beginners—you may want to add other words to the list.

Discuss these words with your students and give examples for each one. Space is provided here so your students can take notes if they wish.

Very important commands

1. Stop!
2. Freeze!
3. Look out!
4. Watch out!
5. Be careful!
6. Hands up!
7. Put your hands up!
8. Watch your step.
9. Don't move.
10. Duck!
11. Hit the deck!
12. Hand over your money!

Signs

DANGER
CAUTION
SLIPPERY WHEN WET
HIGH VOLTAGE
KEEP OUT
OPEN
CLOSED
USE OTHER DOOR
DO NOT ENTER
NO ADMITTANCE
PRIVATE
WRONG WAY
DEAD END
NO OUTLET

ONE WAY
STOP
EXIT
SPEED LIMIT 55
SCHOOL BUS
BUS STOP
FIRE LANE
NO PARKING
DECAL PARKING
RESERVED
RESTROOMS
GENTLEMEN
LADIES
POISON

TOXIC
FLAMMABLE
FIRE ALARM
ENTRANCE
MEN WORKING
NO SMOKING
PULL
PUSH
WAITING ROOM
EMERGENCY
EXPRESS LANE
NO CANDY LANE

Crossword & vocabulary exercise:

Buying a car

To the instructor:

Here is a conversation about buying a car. You and your students can use it to practice the vocabulary needed for talking about purchasing a car. You can read it together, and even use it as a roleplay.

Notice that there are two sets of clues for the crossword puzzle—the conversation on this page, and the definitions on the next page. If your students are already somewhat familiar with this vocabulary, they can probably use the conversation clues to fill out the crossword puzzle on the next page. If the vocabulary is new to them, though, you might want to start with the "definition" clues on page 9. Then when the students have learned the vocabulary, they can try the puzzle again, using the conversation clues the second time.

(Note: If you are using the conversation for a roleplay the numbers might be confusing. You could white them out before copying this page for your students.)

Buying a car

(Two friends are talking.)

Jaime: Did you pass your driver's test?

Lon: Yes. See?—Here's my new driver's ___*(11 Down)*___ .

Jaime: Great! When are you going to buy a car?

Lon: I'm going to look for a car this weekend. Do you want to come with me?

Jaime: OK. Are you looking for a new car or a ___*(2 Across)*___ one?

Lon: I'm planning to buy a second-hand car because it's cheaper.

Jaime: I have a friend who's selling an old car.

Lon: No, thanks. I think I'm going to buy my car from a car ___*(14 Down)*___ .

Jaime: What kind of car are you interested in? American, or ___*(15 Across)*___ ?

Lon: I'm not sure yet. It depends on the price.

(Next day. . .at the dealer's)

Jaime: This car looks very nice.

Lon: No, that's a minivan! It's much too big for me. I'm looking for a 4-door ___*(3 Down)*___ .

Salesman: Can I help you?

Lon: Yes, I'm looking for a medium-sized used car.

Salesman: I can show you this Ford. It's an '89.

Lon: I'd like to try it out. Can I take it for a ___*(12 Across)*___ ?

Salesman: Sure Here are the keys.

(Half an hour later...)

Jaime: What did you think?

Lon: It's easy to drive. It has ___*(13 Across)*___ steering, so it's not hard to turn the wheel. I like it.

Jaime: How about the brakes?

Lon: I think the brakes are OK. The car was easy to ___*(10 Down)*___ .

Salesman: This car also has a radio and air ___*(8 Across)*___ .

Lon: That's good. What's the asking price?

Salesman: This is the asking price here *(points to a sign on the car)*. If you want to pay in monthly installments, we can give you a ___*(7 Down)*___ .

Lon: No, I don't want to borrow the money. I prefer to pay ___*(9 Across)*___ . But I think this price is too high. Can we ___*(5 Down)*___ a better price?

Salesman: Maybe.

(Later that day. . .)

Jaime: Congratulations on your new car!

Lon: Thanks.

Jaime: What's this piece of paper?

Lon: That's the ___*(16 Across)*___ to the car. It says I'm the owner. Now I'm going to the DMV to ___*(6 Down)*___ the car. Do you want to come?

Jaime: Sure. But what about accident ___*(4 Across)*___ ? Did you buy that already?

Lon: Yes, I did. It was expensive, but you can't register your car without it.

Jaime: OK, let's go.

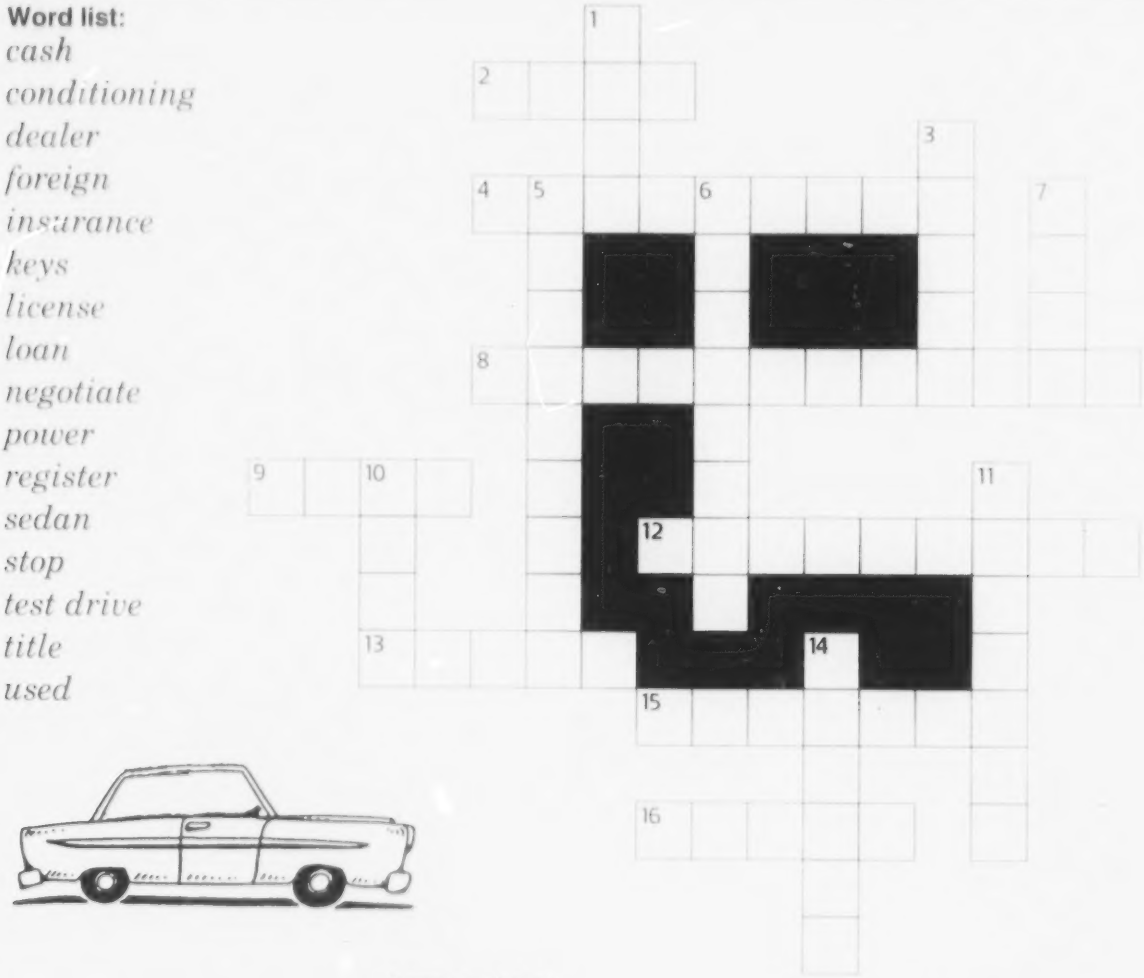
Lon: Just a minute. . .I lost my car ___*(1 Down)*___ .

Crossword puzzle:

Buying a car

Word list:

cash
conditioning
dealer
foreign
insurance
keys
license
loan
negotiate
power
register
sedan
stop
test drive
title
used



Across clues:

2. This kind of car had a previous owner.
4. You buy this every year, in case of an accident.
8. In the summer you need air _____ to keep cool.
9. If you pay all the money now, you are paying _____.
12. Before you buy a car, you should drive it for a few miles first, to check it out. This is a ____ _ __.
13. _____ steering and brakes are easier to use than regular steering and regular brakes.
15. A car made in a different country is a _____ car.
16. This paper has the name of the person who owns this car.

Down clues

1. You need these to open the car door, to open the trunk, and to start the car.
3. A ____ usually has room for four or five people to sit.
5. "_____" means to make a bargain, or to agree on something.
6. You must ____ your car with the state Department of Motor Vehicles.
7. When you borrow money, you take out a _____.
10. To _____ the car, you must step on the brake pedal.
11. Before you can drive, you must take a test and get a driver's _____.
14. A businessman who sells cars is a car _____.

Conversation activities:
Interviews galore!

—by **Margo Menconi**, Bratsk, Russia.

Meaningful talk

In my teaching I have mostly beginning level students. Sometimes my adult students get impatient with only being able to say very simple things at that level. And, in fact it does make one feel kind of immature to be expressing oneself with such seeming child-like simplicity. One way that I've tried to deal with that is to use student interview questionnaires.

By using student interviews, they can speak in a very controlled situation, yet the topics involve real communication at the same time. For more advanced students, they can elaborate beyond the basic questionnaire with more free speech.

I used these interviews with high beginners. At the end of the class period, when students are "warmed up," I give them ten or fifteen minutes to interview each other after I've explained the basics of the particular questionnaire.

Although I used these questions for pair work, several of them could also be used as surveys to collect information from the whole class. Whenever I've used these with my students they were well-received, and students enjoyed feeling that they could actually say something meaningful in their new language.

(Adjectives and opposites)

1. At 11 p.m. are you *awake* or *asleep*?
2. Are you usually *busy* or do you have a lot of *free* time?
3. Do you think this class is going to be *easy* or *difficult*?
4. Is most of your family *hardworking* or *lazy*?
5. Last week were you *healthy* or *sick*?
6. Is your dog (or cat) *intelligent* or *stupid*?
7. Is your kitchen *large* or *small*?
8. Is it *hot* or *cold* out today?
9. Do you feel *young* or *old*?
10. Are students usually *poor* or *rich*?
11. Is your father *serious* or *funny*?
12. Do you prefer *soft*-boiled eggs or *hard*-boiled eggs?
13. Is English a *weak* subject or a *strong* subject for you?
14. Is sugar *sweet* or *sour*?
15. Is your hair *thick* or *thin*?
16. Are you *present* or *absent* from class today?
17. Is the blackboard in the *front* or the *back* of the room?
18. Is this class *boring* or *interesting*?

Interviews galore. . .continued

School

1. What classes do you have now?
2. What is your favorite subject?
3. Which subject is the most difficult?
4. What profession are you studying for? (What is your major?)
5. How many hours a week do you spend on your homework?
6. What do you like better, tests or assignments?
7. What do you like to do better in class, lecture or discussion?
8. Who is your favorite teacher? What subject does he or she teach? Why do you like him or her?
9. Do you think school is important? Why or why not?
10. Do you like school?

Entertainment

Question: If you had a choice, would you. . .
(Answer: I'd go to a rock concert.)

1. . . .go to a rock concert or a classical concert?
2. . . .go to a concert or a movie?
3. . . .go to a science fiction movie or a love story?
4. . . .go to a play or a movie?
5. . . .go to a movie or watch T.V.?
6. . . .go to a ballet or go dancing?
7. . . .go to a quiet restaurant or to a restaurant with a dance floor?
8. . . .play a sport or watch a game?
9. . . .eat at a restaurant or eat at home?
10. . . .go to an art museum or to a museum of history?

Music

1. How many hours do you listen to music every week?
2. Which do you like best: live concerts, TV concerts, music videos, CD's, cassettes, records, or radio?
3. Which of those do you listen to most?
4. What kind of music do you like best? Classical, folk, jazz, rock, rap, country or popular?
5. What is more important to you, the melody or the words of a song?
6. Do you prefer soloists or groups?
7. Who is your favorite singer or group?
8. What language is the music you mostly listen to?
9. Do you sing or play an instrument?

Sports

1. What are your two favorite sports?
2. What sport do you like to play?
3. What sport do you like to watch?
4. Do you know how to play baseball?
5. Do you know how to play American football?
5. Do you think of yourself as athletic?
6. How many times a week (or month) do you play a sport?
7. Do your friends play any sports? If so, which ones?
8. Name one sport you don't understand.
9. Name one sport you don't like.
10. Who is your favorite athlete?

Fruits and Vegetables

Question: Which do you like better . . .
(Answer: I prefer fruit to vegetables.)

1. . . .fruit or vegetables?
2. . . .carrots or potatoes?
3. . . .onions or potatoes?
4. onions or green peppers?
5. . . .tomatoes or carrots?
6. . . .tomatoes or cucumbers?
7. . . .lemons or oranges?
8. . . .grapes or cherries?
9. . . .strawberries or peaches?
10. . . .apples or oranges?
11. What is your favorite fruit?
12. What is your favorite vegetable?

Interviews galore *continued next page.*

Interviews galore. . .continued

Your neighborhood

1. What neighborhood (or town) do you live in?
2. Does your neighborhood have a school? How many?
3. Does it have a day care center? How many?
4. Does it have a library? How many?
5. Does it have a grocery store or supermarket? How many?
6. Does it have a hardware store? How many?
7. Does it have a laundromat? How many?
8. Does it have a bakery? How many?
9. Does it have a liquor store? How many?
10. Does it have a bank? How many?
11. Does it have a restaurant or cafe? How many?
12. Does it have a post office? How many?
13. Does it have a theater (movie or other)? How many?
14. Does it have a police station? How many?
15. Does it have a hospital or clinic? How many?
16. Does it have a drugstore? How many?
17. What transportation is available in your neighborhood?

Note: *As an extra assignment, your students could find out the names of each of the businesses and institutions found in their neighborhood.*

On the market

Reviews of useful ESL materials

"Grammarchants; More Jazz Chants" *by Carolyn Graham (1993 Oxford University Press). Book ISBN 0-19-434236-0 $12.95. Cassette ISBN 0-19-434641-2 $17.50.*

Veteran ESL instructors already know that "Jazz Chants" are one of the best ways to work on student pronunciation. The reason is that instead of focussing on individual sounds, they emphasize the spoken music of phrases and sentences. By participating in a jazz chant, the students get the intonation of natural-sounding English exactly right. Jazz chants can also improve student confidence and provide a short, lively break in the lesson.

This more recent volume of jazz chants, "Grammarchants" offers 75 more examples of short, rhythmical texts that you can chant, shout, sing or whisper with your students. They are organized according to grammar structure, which makes it easy to pull one out that will complement your lesson perfectly.

If you are not sure how to present a jazz chant to your students, you should get the cassette tape. The tape demonstrates the rhythms for you, and conveys the high energy level and fun that are possible with the chants. Once you get the idea, you may not necessarily need to use the tape with your students, but it is helpful to have it.

Any level of student can benefit from jazz chants. The repetition is especially good for beginners, and the fluency practice is good even for advanced students. Some of the chants in this book demonstrate more advanced grammar structures, such as the past continuous ("Who was that man you were talking to?") and would be better for advanced students.

Once you get the hang of jazz chanting, a new dimension in language teaching opens up to you. You may even find that you can make up your own jazz chants, using vocabulary or structures you want your students to learn.

Online Opportunities:

Who is CELIA and why should we be friends?

by **Meg Gam**, fearless Internet explorer and ESL teacher in New York City.

Hanging Out at LaTrobe University

In ESL (and other foreign language) circles, people are talking about CELIA. Well, who or what, exactly, is CELIA?

CELIA is a repository of ESL(and other language) shareware located at LaTrobe University in Australia. What's shareware? Shareware is software for your computer that you don't have to pay for to use. In the case of CELIA, shareware is programs, worksheets, and templates which have been donated by teachers just like you, so that everyone can take advantage of them. There are files for both Macintosh and IBM-Compatible computers. (Right now, its largest collection is in the Macintosh area, but there is still plenty for the IBM-compatible crowd.) Okay, but Australia is too far away? Nope. You can get there on your trusty computer via your modem with a program called "gopher". If you have access to the Internet, you probably already have "gopher".

Step by step

To get to CELIA, you just have to sign on to your Internet service and access the "gopher" facility there (check with your service as to how to do this). Then at your gopher prompt, you write:
gopher.latrobe.edu.au
press ENTER and away you go. When you arrive at LaTrobe, you will see a menu that offers you several choices. You choose 9-Subject-Related. This takes you to another menu, where you choose 2-Info by Subject Area. You'll go to another menu where you choose 29-Language & Linguistics. On the next menu, choose 13-CELIA: Language Shareware. Now you're at CELIA, and you just need to choose 4-English.

On this menu, you can just browse through games, cloze exercises, concordance programs and exercises, grammar, listening, reading, testing, vocabulary, writing, and teacher utilities, and download anything you like.

BONUS! At the bottom of the CELIA menu is a choice for VOA/WORLDNET. This is where the Voice of America news story transcripts are kept. Choose this and then choose VOA. This will take you to a menu which has choices labeled for the days of the week. Under each day, you'll find a number of Voice of America transcripts for news and human interest stories. These are copyright-free current news articles which you can download and format for use in your classes. They are formatted for actual broadcast so you can even use them as simulation activities.

Under CELIA\English, you'll also find the Teaching English as a Second/Foreign Language files, which contain various files collected from old TESL-L online discussions, copies of articles from English Teaching Forum, and information about our profession.

More great stuff

While you were going through all those menus, you may have noticed some other things that looked interesting. They are!

Jobs & Employment, under the (2)-Info by Subject Area has some interesting information which you can use to work up lessons on How to Find a Job, How to Write a Resume, and What to Do in an Interview. There are also listings of different kinds of job descriptions (but I couldn't find a description of "ESL teacher")

Under Education, you will find the AskEric gopher to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), as well as many other interesting and useful things.

Go ahead and "gopher" to LaTrobe and check out CELIA. But keep an eye on the clock, as you will find yourself sorely tempted to wander through the many different offerings of the LaTrobe gopher. You might never need to go anywhere else for anything. It's a genuine one-stop shop!

What is a "gopher"? Originally the term meant someone who would "go for" things and bring them to you, and this is sort of what the program does. Actually, it's easiest to think of an online gopher as a friend with lots of "connections", who can introduce you around to all her friends, so that you can find someone who knows how to get what you want and can help you.

News & notes

Upcoming conferences

◆ December 27-30, 1995—**Modern Language Association (MLA)** in Chicago, Illinois. Contact MLA, fax: 212-477-9863.

◆ January 10-13, 1996—**California Association for Bilingual Education (CABE)** in San José, California.

◆ March 26-30, 1996—**Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)** international conference in Chicago, Illinois. Contact TESOL, fax: 703-836-7864.

◆ April 11-14, 1996—**California TESOL** State conference in San Francisco, California. Contact CATESOL, tel: 415-665-4717.

◆ May 16-18, 1996—**Commission on Adult Basic Education (COABE)** national conference in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. Contact COABE, tel: 412-481-4836.

"English Only"?

This fall the issue of official English legislation was discussed in a subcommittee of the U.S. House of Representatives. Many witnesses testified as to the need for such a law. One witness testified, however, that such a law would violate individuals' First Amendment rights to free speech.

Rep. Dale Kildee, Democrat from Michigan, stated that only .006 percent of government documents are printed in languages other than English. Rep. Pat Williams, Democrat from Montana, pointed out that 97% of Americans already speak English and asked "What's the problem?"

(Thanks to Kimberly Smith of TESOL for this information.)

Minigrants available

Hands-on English offers a small number of Minigrants every year for a classroom project. We will be mailing the grant applications starting in January, and applications for the 1996 grants are due April 30. Please call or write for an application.

Classified ads

To place a classified ad, send your notice of 30 words or less with US $10 to: Hands-on English, P.O. Box 256, Crete, NE 68333 USA. Fax: 402-826-3997. Phone: 402-826-5426. Toll free call-in 1-800-ESL-HAND.

Publications:

Nobel Prize Winners: Biographical Sketches for Listening and Reading. by Lisa F. DeWitt. 20 brief biographies of past and present laureates in all six prize categories and from all over the world. Texts are read on 3 cassettes by 10 American voices. Text with both full and gapped transcripts. ISBN 0-86647-047-6, $12.50. 3 Cassettes ISBN 0-86647-049-2, $27.00. ***Pro Lingua Associates. 800-366-4775.***

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TESOL

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Idea file

Here's a simple but fun activity you can use as a warm-up, or for review of a text the students have already studied.

Clip and save!

Correct my mistakes!

Purpose:	Practice reading/listening for meaning
Level:	Most useful for beginners; can be adapted higher
Time:	10 minutes
Materials:	Handout of a paragraph or text at the students' level

1. Hand out the text. Tell the students you are having some problems with your eyes today, so if you make a mistake in reading they should correct you.
2. Pre-teach some correction phrases, such as: "Excuse me, that's not correct. It says..."
3. Read aloud one sentence at a time. Make a (purposeful) error in meaning in each sentence. For example, if it says "He travelled by airplane" you should say, "He travelled by *car*."
4. Wait for a student to interrupt you with a correction (for example: "That's not correct. It says *airplane*."), prompting them if necessary.
5. Thank the student for the correction and continue with the next sentence, until you have completed the text.

Hint: The more ridiculous your errors are, the more fun the students will have correcting you. Next, have the students try this exercise together in pairs.

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A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

Contents

From the field:
ESL publicity ..... page 3

Multi-level crossword puzzle:
Language learning vocab ..... page 4

Writing:
Poetry without pain—*diamante* ..... page 7

Grammar grab-bag:
A verb wheel ..... page 8

Tools & techniques:
Teaching large classes ..... page 10

"Strip stories" revisited ..... page 12

News & notes ..... page 14

Cartoon ..... page 16

Notes from the Editor: What's new in 96

Greetings and Happy New Year! We have a number of special announcements for you in this issue:

Bad news first

Our financial advisors tell us we're going to go broke unless we raise our prices. So, with reluctance we announce that starting May 1 a regular subscription will be $21 and a multi-user subscription (with permission to photocopy for more than one instructor) will be $28.

You will be receiving a special offer in the mail giving you the opportunity to renew or extend your subscription now at our *current* prices. We hope you'll take advantage of this chance to save in advance. (Hey, that rhymes!)

Meanwhile, *Hands-on* English will continue to bring you the most useful ESL publication for adult students available at any price!

Minigrant applications ready

The 1996 *Hands-on* English Minigrant applications are now available upon request. These are small grants, of up to $200, for a classroom or student project. Anyone working with ESL students is welcome to apply.

Applications are due April 30 and awards will be made in June. If you haven't already contacted us, please write or call for an application form.

Multi-level classes?

We still get requests on a regular basis from readers who are looking for activities and solutions to teaching multi-level classes. If you have suggestions, or activities you'd like to share, we'd be delighted to hear from you.

In this issue, we take on the question of *larger* classes as well (see page 10). We're hearing from more and more people that they have larger classes now, but we're also hearing the surprising news that large classes *can* work! We'll bring you more suggestions in future issues.

Tutors, too

We're eager to print activities that will work well in one-on-one tutoring situations, as many of our readers have a need for these. If you have a lesson to share, let us know!

"Hands-on" in book form?

We are starting to plan a collection of 5 years of great activities from *Hands-on* English. Of course, we'd also like to include a whole bunch of *new* activities to make this book a super-duper helpful teaching tool.

If you would like to contribute a lesson or an activity to this collection, we'd be delighted! We are also looking for variations on old standard activities. For example, on page12 of this issue we bring you a "strip story" or scrambled story exercise. This activity is a "golden oldy" in the ESL teaching biz, but we have produced some new stories to try it with. We think these are always useful.

So, rummage out your files and see what you come up with. With your help, *Hands-on* English will just keep getting better and better. And your students will love it.

Have a great spring!

Happy teaching,

Jenna

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About the publication

Hands-on English is a small, independent publication that was started in 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who has taught ESL in many settings, including adult education programs, a refugee program, community college, and a university intensive English program. . . and survived to write about it!

Articles and ideas are contributed by experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have an article or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

About our Minigrants program

Hands-on English awards a few small grants (of $200 each) annually for practical classroom projects. Applications are due April 30, and are available upon request.

Your editor on a typical day at Hands-on English. "I'm sure it's here somewhere!"

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From the field:

Positive publicity

We thought you would like to see the kind of publicity that one teacher got for her ESL program. The article below appeared in the Batesville Daily Guard, Batesville, Arkansas on November 22, 1995.

The article is fairly long, and details a Thanksgiving event held in the home of ESL instructor Nona Floyd. Floyd teaches at Gateway Technical College in Batesville. It is clear that the reporter spent plenty of time on the article, as it details several of the students' impressions of the event and of this country.

The report gives the public a glimpse of the enthusiasm these students have for their new culture. It also reflects the respect and interest their instructor has for them. "I've learned as much as they have," she is quoted as saying.

We hope this example might inspire you to look for positive publicity for your own program. The public needs to be reminded that our students are wonderful human beings with names and faces, not just statistics. It is important also for the public to understand these are not 'alien intruders,' but cheerful members of our communities!

Publicity like this can have another benefit besides that of community relations. It can be helpful in future fund-raising efforts, and even in demonstrating to legislators the need and importance of ESL programs.

Learning about Thanksgiving

Preparation

Tam Le (left) and Tram Le (right) help their English as a Second Language instructor, Nona Floyd, in preparing an early Thanksgiving feast. The event helped familiarize them with the American holiday and traditions associated with it. Not shown is Trang Le, who also assisted in the meal preparations.

— Photo by Debbie Miller

Meal provides lessons about U.S. culture

By Debbie Miller

Assistant Managing Editor

Nona Floyd's home could have been the setting for a Thanksgiving scene.

The tasteful guest visible on the other side of the family area was winding to a close. Nearby, the three settees — [illegible] with festive napkins and spoons, wreaths — beckoned to the hearty American pot roasts, fixed up in nearly [illegible] casseroles.

Soon the kitchen came the sounds of [illegible] conversation — an exotic world, though the main tenets we [illegible] — [illegible] but still familiar — [illegible] and [illegible].

[illegible] spelling changes when more than one is being talked about — like potato, point the students learned.

Even studying the foods of the American Thanksgiving is no small pursuit. Many of the traditional dishes are unfamiliar.

Safet Sharenkape had not tasted — before Saturday's dinner. In his native Bosnia, chicken is the preferred poultry, he said.

Also from [illegible], special guest Charlie Trang, a native of China and an instructor at the technical college, made that [illegible] and only came to the States about 10 years ago.

(Continued on page 3)

Thanksgiving

(Continued from page 1)

Several of the Vietnamese students had never sampled pumpkin pie. And Hoang Pheng said he didn't waste dressing before.

Floyd, referred Floyd later, as one of those terms that can be difficult to explain to students of English whose native language is something else. Dressing, she had told her students earlier, is what is placed inside to add flavor. But as Thanksgiving she indicated, it's also a side dish made of corn bread and special seasonings.

The traditional Thanksgiving meal is only one of many activities the students and their teacher have undertaken.

Floyd says her role as more than just giving students English words to learn. It's helping them understand the language and the lifestyle.

"It is teaching about our culture and what's [illegible] in the United States," she said.

In this endeavor Floyd has spoken at one time outside the classroom with her students. They have picnicked at Mammoth Spring State Park, celebrated mutual birthdays with a mid-morning American buffet party, and handed out candy to trick-or-treaters at her home on Halloween.

After a lesson on reading menus, they went as a group to Cafe Indigo to practice what they'd learned. They ordered some beef sandwiches, Floyd related with a chuckle.

The encounter doesn't appear to mind the extra work of preparing a large holiday meal for her class on a weekday to help them learn.

Floyd said. "We're friends. They are very special people."

And she sees so many learning about other cultures, [illegible] of her students [illegible] plus learning to Vietnamese. Such experiences may help her better understand her students' struggles.

She said she couldn't read the labels on so many products because the information was written in English.

She and her students also celebrated a Vietnamese New Year in January of this year. And her Russian students made it much less foreign so make hot tea, she said, although she proved uncertain just the seasoning that Russians would use.

Floyd were unable to attend the Saturday feast.

Floyd also described trying to warm the right words to say chicken with rice in Spanish, and how students from students from Iran and Mexico.

She enjoys new knowledge she has gained, especially in terms of understanding other cultures.

"I've learned as much as they have," she said.

And she readily admitted an admiration for her students.

For example, Shareenkape, she pointed out, is a graduate of the University of Sarajevo. He plans to enter graduate school in the United States.

Floyd tells him over the Thanksgiving meal she's impressed that he was able to [illegible] in the midst of a war-torn land.

Shareenkape doesn't dwell on the hardships, but notes quietly, "I was learning with candles."

They talk with Pheng, briefly, about hardships and lots of life in Vietnam. Pheng says he was only a young child when his brother died.

By that time, the main places have been cleaned of their hearty helpings of turkey, dressing, sweet potatoes, green beans and corn, and the sweet dessert known as pumpkin pie has been sampled.

When did Floyd's students think about the traditional meal?

Tam Le, from Vietnam, who had helped in the kitchen with preparations, nodded in affirmation, when Floyd asked if she planned to try cooking a turkey herself this week. Turkey, along with the stuffings, she said.

EARLY THANKSGIVING FEAST

[illegible] Floyd, English as a second language students from Gateway Technical College enjoy early Thanksgiving feast. Shareenkape from Bosnia (left), special guest Charlie [illegible] of Arkansas Technical University in Russellville, Vietnam, and Mrs. Floyd's husband, B.B. Clifford [illegible] of the Floyd home. Floyd [illegible] graduate students. The eight [illegible] Trang Le [illegible] Vietnam, Tam Le [illegible] Vietnam, Hoang Pheng [illegible] Vietnam, Tram Le [illegible] Vietnam, Safet Shareenkape [illegible] Bosnia, Trang Le [illegible] China, Nona Floyd [illegible] Arkansas, and Tram Le [illegible] Vietnam.

Assistant Managing Editor Debbie Miller of the Batesville Daily Guard prepared this story about an ESL class and their Thanksgiving experience.

Multi-level crossword puzzle:

Language learning

Word list:

conversation
fluent
grammar
idiom
interpret
language
pronunciation
punctuation
repeat
slang
spelling
speak
translate
understand
vocabulary
writing

To the instructor:

Here's a puzzle about language learning which is designed for at least two levels of students. Level A should be best for high beginners (or low intermediates). If the clues seem too challenging though, include the word list on this page so students can choose their answers from the list. For students who want the challenge or are familiar with the vocabulary, leave the word list *off* their copies of the puzzle.

Level B should be appropriate for an intermediate or advanced student. Again, it is always harder to do the puzzle without a word list to choose from, so include it for those students who need a little extra help.

How to do it

Make a copy of the puzzle for each student. Copy the clues, cut the two sections apart and distribute the clues to the appropriate students. Keep some extra copies at hand, in case students want to try the puzzle twice! This might be valuable for students who do Level A first and then want to try Level B.

Follow-up

The puzzle might lend itself to some good discussion about the language learning process. See page 6 for a follow-up activity that includes a fun vocabulary review and a writing activity.

Answer key:

Crossword puzzle (continued)

Level A

Across clues

2. When I write in English I make a lot of mistakes. I have trouble with _____ English words.
4. "Take your time" is an _____. It means don't hurry.
6. I don't know this word. Can you _____ it into Chinese?
7. I didn't hear you. Can you _____ that, please?
8. In my country I studied English _____ in school, but I didn't learn how to speak.
9. Sometimes my landlord can't understand what I say. I need to improve my _____.
12. What do you mean? I'm sorry, I don't _____.
14. I studied English in school but I didn't learn any _____ words. Kids sometimes use these special words, for example.
15. I am _____ a letter to my cousin.
16. In some languages they don't have a question mark like this "?" They have different _____ marks.

Down clues

1. I want to learn ten new words every week. Then my _____ will get bigger and bigger.
3. I don't understand what the doctor is saying. Can you _____ for me?
5. My children can _____ two languages.
10. I'm going to take an English _____ class so I can learn to speak English better.
11. What is your first _____?
13. He can speak English but only very slowly. He is not very _____.

Level B

Across clues

2. Writing a word correctly
4. A phrase with a special meaning
6. Change a word from one language to another
7. Say something again
8. For example: nouns, verbs, adjectives
9. Saying the sounds correctly
12. Know what something means
14. Informal language
15. Putting ideas on paper
16. For example: commas, periods

Down clues

1. For example: words, technical terms, jargon
3. Explain what something means in another language
5. Say something, or talk
10. Two or three people speaking together
11. The speech of one country (or one group of people)
13. Speaks quickly and easily

Vocabulary practice:

A Very Good Student!

You probably won't believe this story about one of my students.

He speaks five languages very well. He is _____ in English, Russian, Chinese, Spanish and Hungarian!

Because he was born in Barcelona, Spain, his native _____ is Spanish.

He can write every English word correctly. His _____ is perfect!

He can _____ everything people say in English—even on TV or radio.

He doesn't have an accent in English. His _____ sounds like a native speaker!

He likes to _____ letters, stories, articles and books in English.

He never makes a mistake in _____. His sentences are always correct!

He knows _____ in every field. He can talk in English about archeology, medicine, education, mathematics, history and religion!

I have one question—Why is this student still in my class??

Note:

Use this silly story to give your students some more practice with the language learning vocabulary from the puzzle on p. 4.

(Try reading the story aloud first, then handing it out for students to fill in the blanks.)

Then, use the story as an impetus to have students write something ***positive*** *about their own first language skills.*

Often our discussion of language learning focuses only on what students can't *do, or* need to *do, and that can be discouraging.*

(Write about yourself and your native language. Use the story above as a model.)

My first language by

I am fluent in _____

Hands-on writing:

'Diamante'—Poetry without pain

by Sal Pariato Jr., Rochester, NY.

Your students may not believe that they can wite a poem, but you can help them create one in a new format called *diamante*, or "diamond" poetry. A *diamante* poem can describe diametrically opposed subjects (such as Summer/Winter) or it can suggest the evolution of a concept (such as in the example poem below). In either case, it's a fun, non-threatening task for ESL writers. Here's how to do it, step by step.

Choose a subject

To find your topic, list some ideas on the board and ask your students to give the *opposite* for each one. Examples are:

Winter _____

Day _____

City _____

Baby _____

Canada _____

College _____

Slavery _____

Now have the students select one of these ideas for a sample poem. We'll use DAY for this example.

Start writing

Have the students write DAY at the top of the paper, skip 5 lines and write the opposite (NIGHT) on the seventh line. Now, discuss together what we call the middle-time that comes in between the times of DAY and NIGHT. Afternoon? Good—what are four things that you see during the afternoon? Have each student write these four things (nouns) on line number four.

Filling in

Now, think again about the idea of DAY. What are two words that tell how you feel in the morning? Write those two words (adjectives) on line two. For line three, give me three words ending in "ing" that explain the early part of the day or describe what you do then. For example, the words "beginning" or "showering" or "working." Now write these three words (verbs) on line three.

The DAY is half finished, so now give me three more "ing" words about the second half of the day and write them on line five. For line six, we need two words that show how you feel at the end of the DAY when NIGHT begins to come.

There! You've just finished a whole day and you've made a *diamante* poem—that is, a poem that looks like a diamond. Now you can try to make another one, using the same rules you used here but with a different starting word.

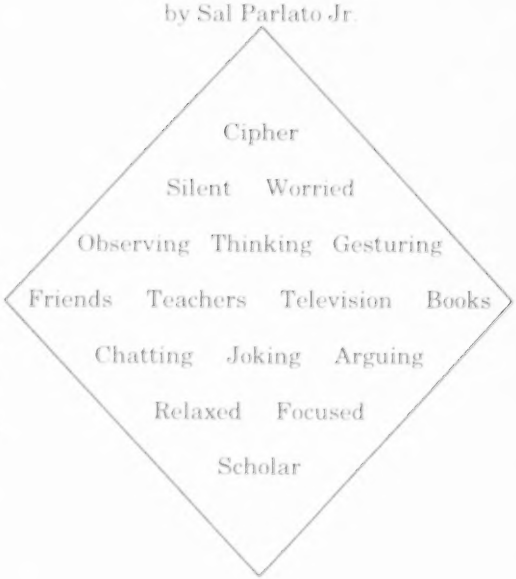
Teaching note

The *diamante* format allows you to introduce parts of speech for their function before going into terms such as "present participles, adjectives, abstract nouns," etc. *Diamante* is useful for early learners of English because it demands minimal vocabulary (sixteen terms, to be exact) and is a relatively non-threatening linguistic task.

An example

Please accept my own *diamante*, "Second Language Stages" as an example of one finished product. (For introducing me to this new literary structure I'd like to thank Dr. Brett Elizabeth Blake and her graduate assistant Stephanie Kuhn, both of Nazareth College of Rochester, New York.)

"Second Language Stages"
by Sal Parlato Jr.



Grammar grab-bag:

"Verb wheel" for practicing forms

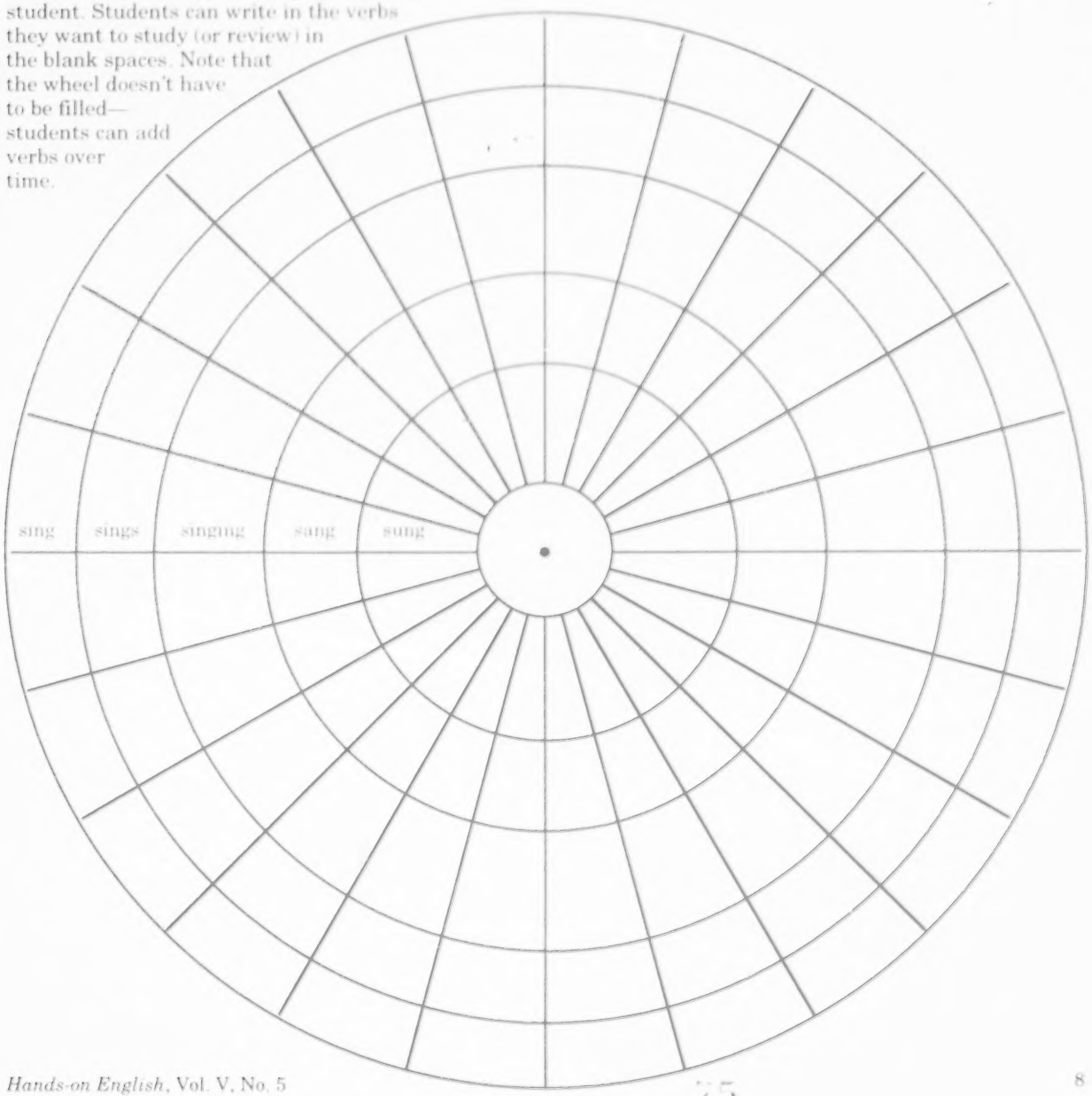
Learning the forms of irregular verbs is one of those necessary evils of English language study. Here's a 'hands-on' alternative to studying from flashcards or lists—a verb wheel! Each wheel can hold as many as 24 verbs. It can be customized to the words each student needs to study. One student can use the wheel for self-study, or a pair of students can use them to quiz each other.

How to do it

Make a photocopy of this page for each student. Students can write in the verbs they want to study (or review) in the blank spaces. Note that the wheel doesn't have to be filled—students can add verbs over time.

Next, photocopy the top section of the wheel (see next page) onto stiff paper or cardstock. If your copier doesn't take heavy paper, a copy can be glued onto cardstock instead, and then cut out. You'll need a clasp or pin to connect the two sections.

The bottom section can be changed later in order to practice new verbs.

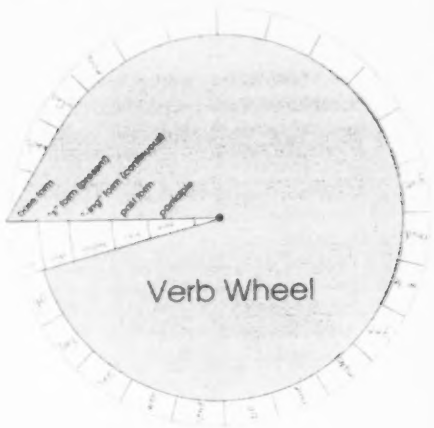


A verb wheel (continued)

Why it works

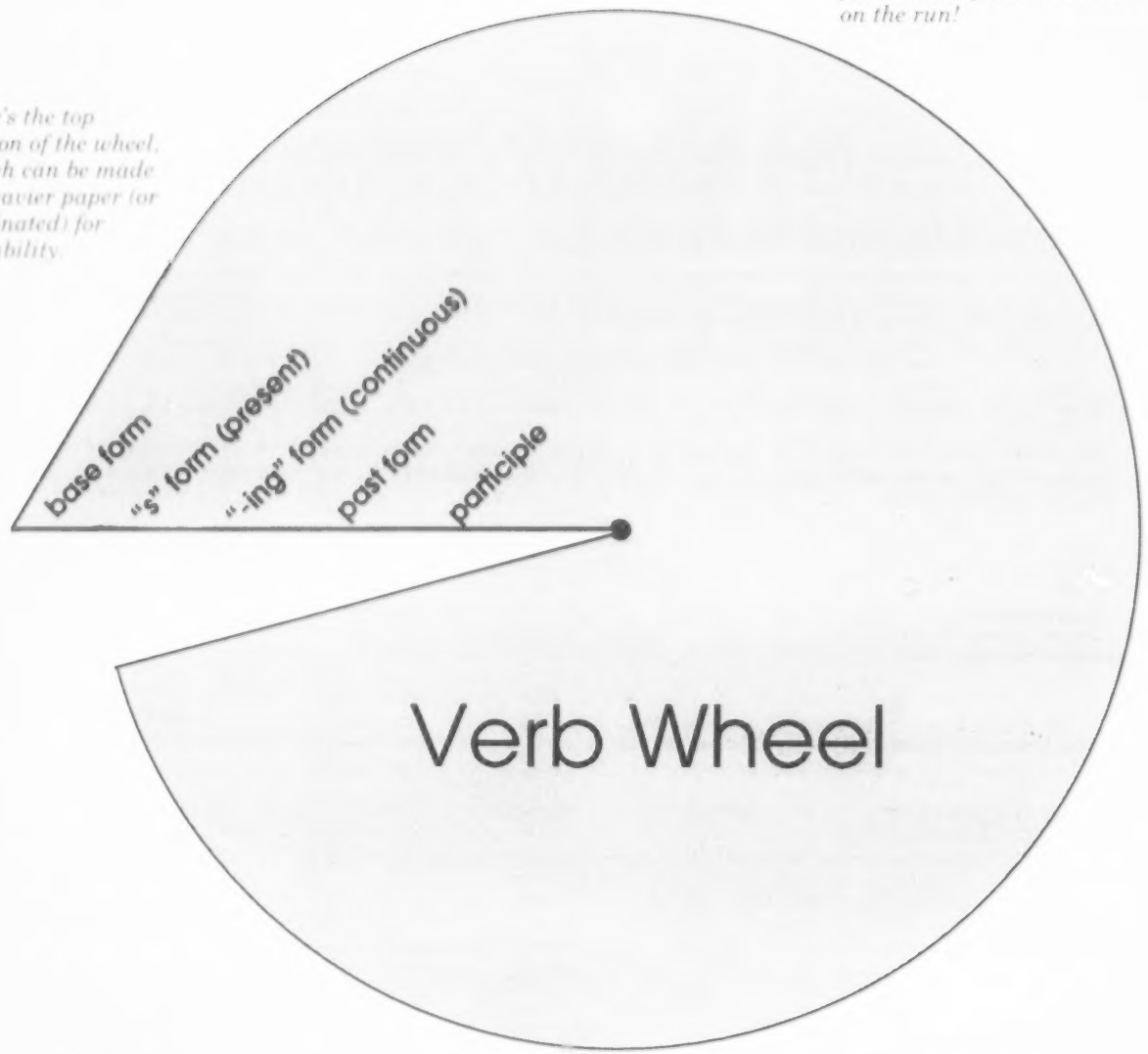
The wheel adds some variety to the sometimes tedious task of learning verb forms. It can be tailored to the individual needs of each student.

Students working together don't have to be learning the same verbs, because they can exchange wheels to quiz each other. This is helpful if the students are at different levels.



The completed wheel is portable for practice sessions on the run!

Here's the top section of the wheel, which can be made of heavier paper (or laminated) for durability.



Tools & Techniques:

LOVE OF NUMBERS, or, working with large classes and loving it!

by ***Meg Gam****, ESL teacher in New York, NY.*

This is one teacher's response to our question—how do we deal with large classes? We will bring you more on this topic in future issues!

I guess I'm lucky. The first language class I ever taught had 30 students. I wouldn't have been less scared in front of a class of 10. I didn't know any better. I just taught. About two weeks into the class, my program director came to me and told me that they'd made a mistake and they now wanted to split the class. I asked them not to. I didn't know any better, but we were already working well together, and I thought it would be a shame to break up the class...

I happen to love large classes (of up to 30), but then, someone told me once that your first experience will determine your preferences.... After my first experience, things were just never the same, until I got into a school abroad, where popularity determined whether or not a teacher got more students. I learned to love a packed classroom all over again.

It's easier to teach a large class if you have enough room to seat the students in a "horseshoe" or semi-circle formation. That way, the students can all see one another and conversation can be started up easily. A horseshoe of students doesn't usually take up any more space than rows, unless your classroom has a weird shape. With students in a semi-circle, you can move around to different students, yet keep an eye on all of them. In my experience, there's less likelihood that you might lose someone in the back row (because there isn't a back row, plain and simple).

So, how do you work with large classes relatively painlessly? Large classes do require some special work, but not much if you have some tricks up your sleeve. Here are some ideas.

PAIRS/GROUPS: It's almost a virtual necessity to get those students into pairs and groups as soon as they can say "hello". It can be done. It can be done most easily in a class with multiple first languages. It can also be done with multi-level classes. The good part about having large classes is that there are plenty of people available for mixing. No one has to be with the slow student more than once a week, for example, and groups and pairs can be reorganized three or four times in a classroom period. If group-assignment is done in the L2 by the teacher, the students get used to listening for important information and understanding it very quickly.

In large classes, I usually put students into pairs to complete exercises which normally might be done extemporaneously, or as a silent individual exercise. The students must work together in English to complete the exercise. (This often entails a little running around, on the part of the teacher, to remind the students to work together.)

Any exercise which can be done individually can be done in pairs, and often in groups. In pairs and groups, students must work together and agree upon the correct answers, using English to do so. Map/direction-giving exercises work well, as do decision-making exercises, which can be found in most language-learning game/activities books.

DRILLS: Repetition drills are good to get all students vocalizing in a large class. Substitution drills in combinations with repetition drills are good for keeping the attention levels high. Individual drills/substitution drills, etc., work as long as you avoid any set pattern in calling on the students, and don't just go around the room from end to end.

GUIDED CONVERSATION: In large classes, guided conversation can work well, provided you don't simply go around the room (the first ones will turn off as soon as they've finished, and the last ones won't pay attention until you've come close to them). Instead, call on students in opposite parts of the room, at random, to keep the attention level high.

Benefits

The energy level, and the potential for interaction (and fun) is very high in a large class. Given a preference, I'd choose a larger group!

Group activity:

ESL gangs

We asked Meg Gam for an example of an activity to use with a large class (see previous page). Here's what she suggested, and it sounds intriguing—especially if you and your students have a sense of humor.

(This reminds us of the time we had a class stage a bank robbery. The students playing the role of robbers really got into the part—they had the doors barricaded with desks to keep the "police" from getting in. . .it was exciting but would have been hard to explain to a visitor!)

AGE: teenage to adult (including seniors)

LEVEL: low intermediate and up

NOTE TO THE TEACHER: Although this might seem like an odd group activity at first, you will find that most of the issues are topics in the news, or issues in advertising, etc. With a little pre-explanation of vocabulary, you will find that your class (teenagers to adults, regardless of age) will respond very actively, and, in groups of 3-5, will have some very enthusiastic discussion. After about 1/2 hour to 45 minutes of discussion and planning, the gangs should be called upon to introduce themselves to the class. Each gang member should be expected to have something to say in the presentation. The other class members, or the teacher should feel welcome to ask questions of each gang, as the members introduce themselves and explain their "jobs" in the gang.

Gang warfare

There is to going to be an all-city conference of the most blood-thirsty gangs in the world, in order to stop senseless killing. Your gang has been invited to attend. Before you can go, you must write down some information about your gang. Work with the other members of your gang to fill in the required information for the conference. Your gang may be asked to tell about itself at the conference, so be specific.

GANG NAME (What is the name of your gang?)

LEADER (Who is the bloodthirsty leader of your gang?)

MOTTO (What is your secret motto?)

SLOGAN (What is the advertising slogan that your write on walls and put on your business cards?)

INDIVIDUAL NICKNAMES (What are the nicknames of all of the ferocious members of your gang?)

SPECIALTY (What does your gang do to make money?)

robbery

prostitution

selling drugs

extortion/protection

kidnapping

murder for hire

OTHER: (Please explain the nature of your criminal money-making specialty))

INDIVIDUAL JOBS WITHIN THE GANG (What is each member of the gang responsible for "on the job"?)

GANG UNIFORM

(Do the gang members wear any particular clothing or outfit "on the job"? If so, please describe it.)

FREE TIME ACTIVITIES/ENTERTAINMENT (What does your gang do for fun, when not "on the job"?)

FAVORITE FOODS (What do members of your gang prefer to eat?)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OF INTEREST

(Is there anything else which you would like us to know about your gang?

Tools & techniques:

"Strip stories" revisited

In our very first issue (Vol. I, No. 1, May/June 1991) we featured an article on using "strip stories," or scrambled stories, with ESL students. This is a popular activity, because it can be used in so many ways—as group work for listening practice, as review, or even as as individual work for reading.

As a busy instructor, though, you always need more examples and new materials to use with your students, so we are offering a new set of "strip stories" for you to try.

How to do it

Select a text the students have some familiarity with. Cut the story into 8 or 10 sections. Have the students sit in small groups, and divide the pieces of the story among them.

The object is for the students to assemble the story orally, without looking at each other's papers. To do this they will need to listen to each other carefully.

When the group agrees they have the story in the correct order, have them read it aloud to the rest of the class. In some cases it may take some time for them to complete this task.

Follow-up

You can follow this activity up immediately with a dictation from the story the students have just assembled. When the students have finished writing, they can correct the dictations from the "strips" they have in their groups. Or, have the students give the dictation to each other.

Finding more stories

We give you three examples here of stories that will work for this activity. **Example 1** is an operation or sequence the students will be familiar with. You can write a similar example using any daily occurrence, or see the book "Operations in English" by Gayle Nelson and Thomas Winters (Pro Lingua Associates, ISBN 0-86647-074-3) for lots of other examples you can work from.

Example 1. A sequence—"The dictation" (8 sentences)

Good morning, class.
Today we're going to have a dictation.
Please take a piece of paper and a pencil.
Before we start, write your name on the top of the paper.
Next, write the numbers 1 to 10 on your paper.
Now I will read 10 sentences to you.
Please listen carefully to each sentence, and then write.
Good luck!

"Strip stories" (continued)

Example 2 is a review of a story the students have already read or studied in class. (In this case, we assume your students have been reading about getting a driver's license.)

You can prepare a similar activity to review any previous material your students have worked on. Just write a summary of the story in a few sentences. Use slightly different phrasing from the story the students read, and use plenty of connectors, such as "first, then, after that..." Then cut up the sentence strips and distribute.

Example 3 is a retelling of a true story that a student told in class the day before. If you prepare a strip story based on something a student told the class, the students will recognize the story as they start to work on the activity.

Example 2. Review— "Getting a driver's license" (8 sentences)

If you want to drive a car, you have to get a driver's license first.
Before you can get a driver's license, you have to pass a test.
The first part of the test is written.
You can study for the written test from a book.
In the second part of the test, you have to drive your car with the examiner.
You can practice for the driving test with a friend or relative who already has a license.
If you pass the test, you can go to the DMV and get your driver's license.
If you don't pass the test, you can try again later.

Example 3. Retelling— "A true story" (10 sentences)

On Monday, Han and his family woke up early.
Han was very upset to see that someone had broken into his apartment.
The door was open and his briefcase was gone.
In that briefcase he had money and his daughter's birth certificate.
All day Han felt very worried.
On Tuesday morning, Han woke up early and checked the door.
There was a piece of paper on the floor.
Somebody had returned his daughter's birth certificate.
Han was very, very happy.
"The money is not important," he said.

News & notes

Upcoming conferences

◆ February 24, 1996—**2nd annual Capitol Area CATESOL Conference** at California State University, Sacramento. Contact: Lynne Nicodemus, phone 916-568-3100, ext. 2997.

◆ March 8–9, 1996—**Carolina TESOL** Spring conference in Columbia, South Carolina. Contact: Kathy Bledsoe, phone 803-777-2586.

◆ March 8–9, 1996—**Louisiana TESOL** annual conference in Hammond, Louisiana. Contact: Dr. Jo Ann Robisheaux, phone 504-549-2230.

◆ March 12–16, 1996—**National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE)** annual conference in Orlando, Florida. Phone 202-898-1829.

◆ March 26-30, 1996—**Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)** international conference in Chicago, Illinois. Contact TESOL, fax: 703-836-7864.

◆ April 11-14, 1996—**California TESOL** State conference in San Francisco, California. Contact CATESOL, tel: 415-665-4717.

◆ April 13, 1996—**Northern New England TESOL** in Brattleboro, Vermont. Contact Polly Howlett, phone 802-654-2274.

◆ April 21–23, 1996—**National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL)** annual conference in Louisville, Kentucky. Fax: 502-584-0172.

◆ May 16-18, 1996—**Commission on Adult Basic Education (COABE)** national conference in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. Contact COABE, tel: 412-481-4836.

Take us along?

If you're going to a conference or meeting this spring and would like to take some samples of *Hands-on English* to show your colleagues, don't hesitate to call us.

We also have a small display packet with a sign-up sheet for free samples. If you have some table space, this is easier than lugging samples around. Thank you for your help in spreading the word about *Hands-on English!*

Workplace literacy publication

Many readers have asked us where they can get information about workplace literacy programs. We thought you would like to know about a free quarterly publication called *The Connector* which is subtitled "Forging Links Between Language and Employment Skills for Adult Immigrants." This is the newsletter for the Project in Adult Immigrant Education (PAIE) funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

To receive *The Connector*, contact:

Lucinda Branaman
Center for Applied Linguistics
1118 22nd St, NW
Washington, DC 20037
Phone: 202-429-9292
Fax: 202-659-5641
E-mail: lucinda@cal.org

The Connector can put you in touch with other resources that are available such as the WorkWorld Resources Database (soon to be online on the Worldwide Web), handbooks, research summaries and professional development syllabi.

Of particular interest to our readers might be the Project's annotated bibliography, **ESL Instruction in the Health Care Professions** (available free of charge at the same address above.) Other short articles and bibliographies are also available.

If you're serious about workplace education, get on this mailing list!

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Publications:

THE BIG BOOK OF GOOD STARTS & HAPPY ENDINGS A sampler of reproducible dialogues, dictations, fix-it paragraphs, interviews, surveys and games for the all-important beginning and ending of multi-level ESL classes. (45 activities, ISBN 1-883965-38-1, Rattle OK Publications, P.O. Box 5614, Napa CA 94581-0614. $10.95)

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From Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc.

English as a Second Language Oral Assessment (ESLOA)

by Joye Shaffer, Ed.D., & Teri McLean, M.A.

An essential tool for ESL tutors, revisions are based on the latest research in communicative and authentic language learning. LVA's assessment tool provides tutors with adult ESL learners' entry levels and measures progress in speaking and understanding English. Careful analysis of the results, in combination with level descriptions and appropriate life competencies assist a tutor in creating a learner-centered curriculum.

Developed by the Northern Colorado Consortium of Adult Reading Academies, U.S. Dept. HEW Right to Read Program, ***ESLOA*** serves as a guide to help meet the tutoring needs of each student as quickly and efficiently as possible.

The 1995 updated ESLOA features:

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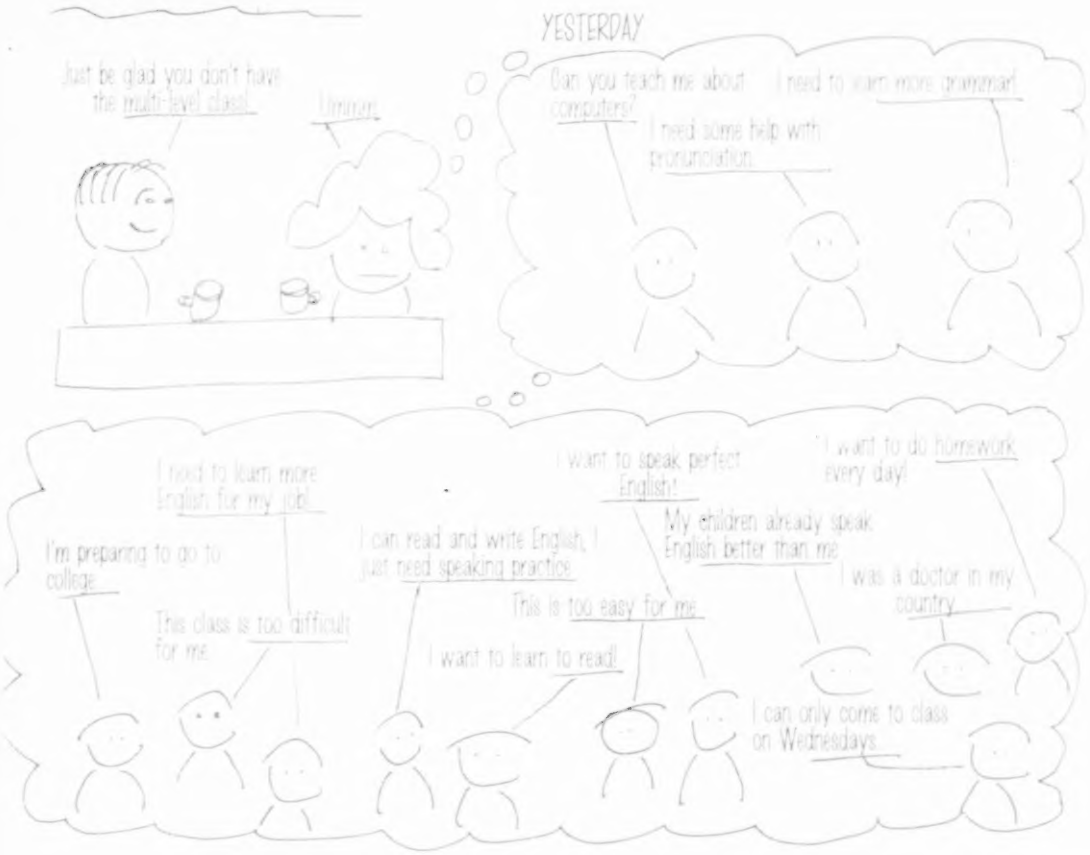
Just be glad you don't have the multi-level class!
Ummm
YESTERDAY
Can you teach me about computers?
I need to learn more grammar!
I need some help with pronunciation.
I need to learn more English for my job.
I'm preparing to go to college.
This class is too difficult for me.
I can read and write English, I just need speaking practice.
I want to speak perfect English!
My children already speak English better than me.
This is too easy for me.
I want to learn to read!
I want to do homework every day!
I was a doctor in my country.
I can only come to class on Wednesdays.

Hands-on
English
A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult ESL
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Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

Letters and calls ..... page 3

Grammar grab-bag:
A 'family' model for modals ..... page 4

Tools & techniques:
Discover your neighborhood! ..... page 6

Crossword puzzle:
Places in the neighborhood ..... page 9

Hints & tips:
Ideas for large classes ..... page 10

Online opportunities:
Netsurfing ESL ..... page 13

News & notes ..... page 14

Editorial:
Jobs and learning

A number of years ago, we taught ESL in a federally funded Refugee Program. The administrators of the program needed to demonstrate employment numbers in order to get their funding renewed each year. The funding was necessary not only for their own jobs and the jobs of the staff, but to maintain some very important services to the refugees.

So, many students were rushed after a couple of months' basic English instruction into low-skill, entry-level jobs. Some of the students were pleased with this—they were delighted to be working and earning their own money. Others would have preferred more education first.

Unfortunately, when businesses laid off these workers because of a downturn in the economy, these refugees did not have enough English skills to get further training, or to apply for better jobs. They had to come back to the Refugee Program for help, and in some cases go on welfare.

It seemed to us even then that an "investment" of more English language training at the outset would have resulted in a more flexible, self-sufficient person.

There's an old saying, something like: "Give people a fish to eat and they'll eat for a day. Teach them to fish, and they'll feed themselves for a lifetime." But it's important to add to this: "To teach people to fish, you must have a teacher!"

Most people, unless they already have a lot of language training, can't learn a language just by "picking it up." They need some good instruction. They need more English programs, not fewer of them.

They need *you*. So, keep up the good work, and good luck with your fishing lessons!

Send us your materials

We hope you enjoy this issue. Many people have responded to our call for more activities by sending us some wonderful things. We've brought you some of them in this issue. Keep those great ideas coming!

Price hike soon

Don't forget, there's still time to renew or extend your subscription before our prices go up on May 1st. We will be happy to add another year onto your subscription!

Minigrant deadline

The deadline for applications for the 1996 Minigrants is April 30th. If you would like an application form, please contact our office. Thank you!

Hands-on English

Volume V, Number 6
March/April 1996

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About the publication

Hands-on English is a small, independent publication that was started in 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who has taught ESL in many settings, including adult education programs, a refugee program, community college, and a university intensive English program. . . and survived to write about it!

Articles and ideas are contributed by experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have an article or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

About our Minigrants program

Hands-on English awards a few small grants (of $200 each) annually for practical classroom projects. Applications are due April 30, and are available upon request.

Your editor, Anna Silliman, hopes you will share some of your teaching ideas with our readers. We'd like to hear from you!

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Letters & calls

New Prices

We recently announced that our prices for renewals and new subscriptions will go up May 1st. The regular teacher rate will be $21, the multi-user rate $28. One reader wrote to ask:

"Will your new rates not include a discount rate for volunteers? A jump from $10 to $21 seems like a lot."

Yes, we will offer a discount for volunteer tutors, but only to you, our existing subscribers (the rate will be $15). Our costs have gone up so much that we can't afford to offer the discount to new subscribers any more.

Large, or really large?

"I'm a long-time reader and love *Hands-on*. But I had to laugh at your latest one about tools for teaching "large" classes. The writer talks about her class of 30. In the non-credit classes of City College of San Francisco we have anywhere from 30 (tiny) up to 70 or more. I usually have about 50 in one class and 39 in the other. Now that's a big class!" —Denise Selleck, via email

We heard from a number of readers that size is only relative! By the way, see pages 10 and 11 of this issue for more on large (or really large) classes.

Storytelling

"Storytelling is one of the best ways to learn a language and if you set the story to music it's even better. "Peter and the Wolf" and "The Carnival of the Animals" are examples. Please let me know about your storytelling and story reading experiences."

—Lloyd Rogers, Czech Republic
Roger-LL@jh.jcu.cz

If you have some ideas on storytelling to share, you can send an email to Lloyd at the above address, or contact Hands-on English *and we'll relay your response.*

'Gangs' activity

A few readers have told us they had reservations about the 'ESL gangs' activity we printed in our last issue (Vol. V, No. 5, p. 11). One reason for the concern is that the activity might be offensive, painful or upsetting to students whose lives have been shattered by gang warfare.

Here is a partial excerpt from a long and thoughtfully written letter:

"I am accustomed to working with large groups of adult ESL students. Groups of not merely 30, but 35–45+ are common in our school district. I concur with Ms. Gam's observations and have used many of the same techniques described in the 'Tools & techniques' section. However, I have some very serious concerns about the group activity entitled 'ESL Gangs' described in the second section. . .This activity as it stands is, in my opinion, ill-advised. . .as it reinforces a dangerously uninformed and simplistic view of gang activity.

"The word 'gangs' in Ms. Gam's title initially grabbed my attention because gangs are so often a highly visible and emotional issue among my students. I am with Ms. Gam in including this topic in the classroom. I also believe that small-group activities are the technique of choice in a large class. The ideas of exploring other identities and negotiating solutions are great. I think that with some re-tooling, this activity can be highly useful in empowering students to cope with gang-related crime on both a personal and social level.

"I suggest first polling students on their definition of 'gangs' and the images that they associate with gangs. (The teacher can learn a lot here). The class might then explore the nature and activity of gangs through U.S. history or media images of gangs. . .or speculate on the aspects of gang affiliation that appeal to young people.

"Re-design the activity to simulate overall community problem-solving. Assign various community identities to your groups of 3–5. Include a group to represent gang members, but also include senior citizens, police officers, teachers, etc. . . Submit a gang-related community challenge to the whole class, such as guns on school campuses or possible teen curfew. Ask each group to discuss solutions and concerns from the point of view of the group they represent. . .Solutions can be negotiated and the entire class can vote on the community action to be taken.

"I suggest that this version of the group activity might better address and serve the needs of our students, enabling them to . . . consider proactive alternatives and solutions to community problems."

—Zoë Dixon, Los Ángeles, CA

Grammar grab-bag:

A 'family' model for modals

by **Linda Holden**, ESL instructor at College of Lake County, Grayslake, Illinois. Email: jhold1127@aol.com

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Rationale

I've noticed that many ESL students struggle with learning how to use modals. As I've reflected on this over time, I've come to realize that many instructors do not give their students an overview of modal forms. Instead, the students often learn about models in "piece- meal" fashion while being introduced to polite forms of expression and other social situations which demand modal usage.

As a result, ESL students are often made aware of modal usage in English in an incomplete fashion, without learning all the members of the modal class, and at the same time, failing to understand two crucial aspects of modal usage:

a) the modal class is its own unique group or "family" of verb forms all behaving grammatically in the same way, and

b) the modal class of verb-like forms doesn't behave structurally in the same way as other verbs in English do.

It was while I was searching for an effective teaching tool for models that I created the idea of talking about modals as a family. My students appreciate learning about models in this way because it helps them connect something they have trouble remembering (the models) to something with which they are already very familiar (families). Try the steps below and see how your students respond!

Introduction

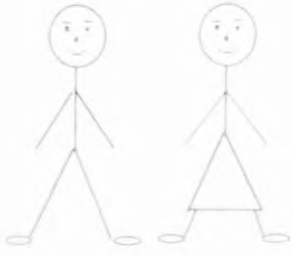
Step 1) Give your students an overview of the models by introducing the Modal Family with all its children: the 3 sets of twins (can/could, shall/should, will/would) and the set of triplets (may/might/must). You can even take advantage of the built-in rhyme and rhythm of the models by saying them out loud (in pairs) with your students and having them repeat them with you. Your students will learn the modals quickly!

Step 2) Use the "How the Modal Family Works" sheet to teach students about the special grammatical constraints which operate on the Modal Family and their "neighbors". Discuss the sheet with them and point out the other "families" in the neighborhood that the Modal children are not allowed to play or work with. You can then develop a set of exercises to help your students practice the special constraints of modal verb forms.

Step 3) Since this lesson is intended to be an overview and an introduction to modal usage, I defer other modal-related issues—such as the multiple meanings and uses of modals and how to use other modal-like forms (their cousins: used to, ought to, dare and need) to subsequent class discussion times.

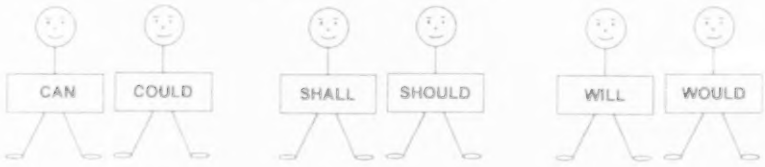
Introducing:
The Modal Family

Mr. & Mrs. Modal

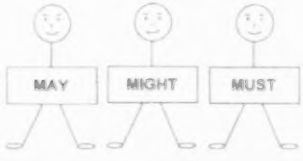


...and all the modal children:

3 sets of twins



and
1 set of triplets



[Note: Do not confuse the Modal Family with their cousins: Used to, Ought to, Need and Dare.]

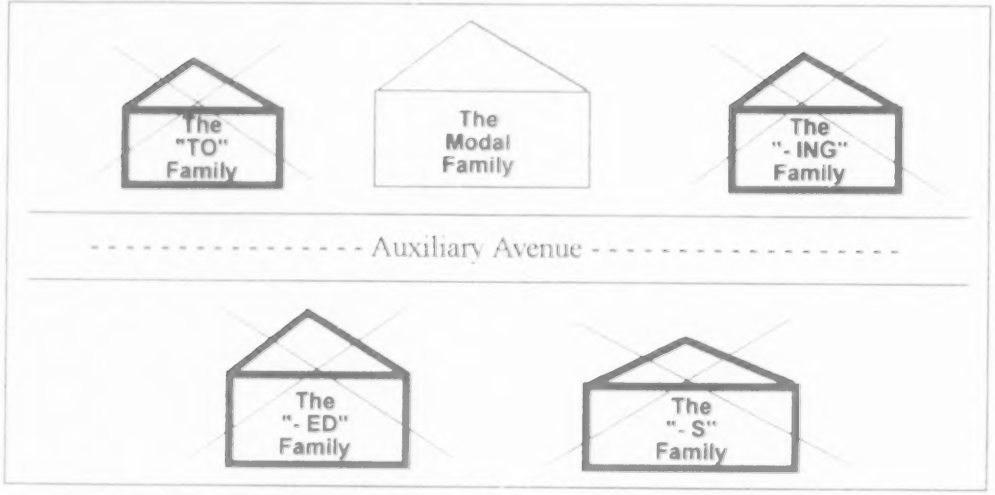
The Modal family, cont'd

How the Modal Family works

Mr. and Mrs. Modal are very strict parents, and don't allow their children to play with certain other children in the neighborhood.

Look at the map below to see which neighbors the Modal children can't play with.

Verbal Village



The Modal children never play or work with:

- **To**

  * I can to go. * (Wrong)

- **-ing**

  * Juan should writing his sister. * (Wrong)

- **-s**

  * Maria will writes her brother. * (Wrong)

- **-ed**

  * Maria must walked to school. * (Wrong)

Remember two other things about the modals:

1) Their past forms can refer to present and future time, often with a tentative meaning.

   He could be outside now. (present)
   Would you phone him tomorrow? (future)

2) The same form can have more than one meaning, and often will, depending on the intended meaning of the speaker or writer:

   Could you please close the window? (showing politeness)
   Yesterday, I couldn't go to the concert. (past of can)

Tools & techniques:

Discover your neighborhood!

I created this activity when I was teaching refugees and immigrants in Pittsburgh. I wanted to make my class interesting and salient while the students practiced their skills.

Free teaching material

Being new to the city myself, I contacted an agency called "Neighborhoods for Living." They provide a wonderful welcome packet to new residents, including a very detailed map of the city (every street is labeled); paragraph-long descriptions of each of the city's neighborhoods; charts, tables and graphs about industry; and information about tourist attractions.

This was exactly the kind of information my newly-arrived students needed to know. I realized that they wouldn't even know where to begin getting their own packet, let alone having the skills to read it. So I adapted some of the information to several reading, speaking and writing activities for them.

These activities might take two or three class sessions. They are best suited to intermediate or advanced students, but the authentic materials can be adapted to any level, especially the charts and maps. Reading, speaking and writing practice are all integrated into the activities.

(Editor's note: *You can find a "welcome packet" for your city or area from the local Chamber of Commerce. Or, ask if there is an agency or civic group which shares this kind of information. If you're new to the area yourself, first stop is the public library—they'll point you in the right direction. Also, ask a real estate agent where to get descriptions and maps of your town.*)

by **Mary Rebscher**
Mary currently teaches at the LG Academy in Seoul, Korea. She developed this material while teaching adult ESL at the Allegheny Intermediate Unit and at Catholic Charities in Pittsburgh, PA.

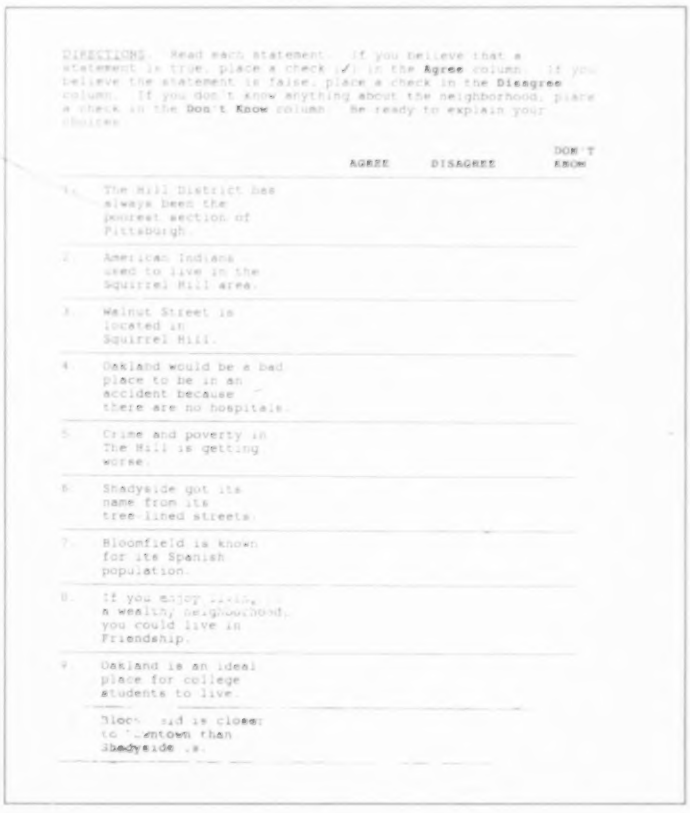
1. Pre-reading activity

Building a "schema" of knowledge

Begin the activity by finding out how much your students already know about their city. I did this by creating a worksheet listing 10 statements. Some statements were stereotypes about a neighborhood ("Crime and poverty in the Hill District is getting worse"), factual ("Walnut Street is located in Squirrel Hill") and trivia ("Shadyside got its name from its tree-lined streets").

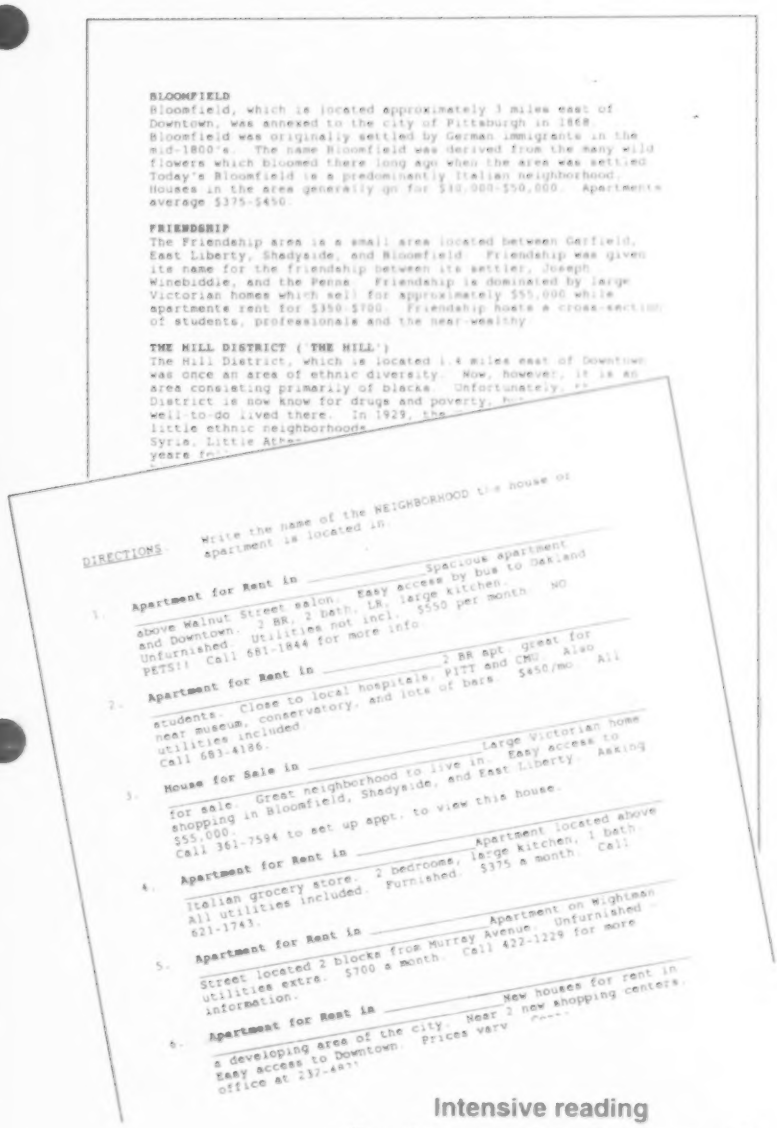
Students had to decide whether they agreed or disagreed with each statement. I also gave the option of "I don't know." To make this a discussion activity, I told them to be ready to explain their choices (but I didn't say if they were right or wrong at this stage).

Here is the worksheet for discussion which Mary created by picking out a few items from the passages the students would read later.



DIRECTIONS: Read each statement. If you believe that a statement is true, place a check (✓) in the **Agree** column. If you believe the statement is false, place a check in the **Disagree** column. If you don't know anything about the neighborhood, place a check in the **Don't Know** column. Be ready to explain your choices.

		AGREE	DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW
1.	The Hill District has always been the poorest section of Pittsburgh.			
2.	American Indians used to live in the Squirrel Hill area.			
3.	Walnut Street is located in Squirrel Hill.			
4.	Oakland would be a bad place to be in an accident because there are no hospitals.			
5.	Crime and poverty in The Hill is getting worse.			
6.	Shadyside got its name from its tree-lined streets.			
7.	Bloomfield is known for its Spanish population.			
8.	If you enjoy [illegible] a wealthy neighbourhood, you could live in Friendship.			
9.	Oakland is an ideal place for college students to live.			
	Bloo[illegible]sid is closer to Downtown than Shadyside is.			



BLOOMFIELD
Bloomfield, which is located approximately 3 miles east of Downtown, was annexed to the city of Pittsburgh in 1868. Bloomfield was originally settled by German immigrants in the mid-1800's. The name Bloomfield was derived from the many wild flowers which bloomed there long ago when the area was settled. Today's Bloomfield is a predominantly Italian neighborhood. Houses in the area generally go for $30,000-$50,000. Apartments average $375-$450.

FRIENDSHIP
The Friendship area is a small area located between Garfield, East Liberty, Shadyside, and Bloomfield. Friendship was given its name for the friendship between its settler, Joseph Winebiddle, and the Penns. Friendship is dominated by large Victorian homes which sell for approximately $55,000 while apartments rent for $350-$700. Friendship hosts a cross-section of students, professionals and the near-wealthy.

THE HILL DISTRICT ('THE HILL')
The Hill District, which is located 1.4 miles east of Downtown was once an area of ethnic diversity. Now, however, it is an area consisting primarily of blacks. Unfortunately, the Hill District is now know for drugs and poverty, but many well-to-do lived there. In 1929, the [illegible] little ethnic neighborhoods [illegible] Syria, Little Athens [illegible] years [illegible]

DIRECTIONS: Write the name of the NEIGHBORHOOD the house or apartment is located in.

1. **Apartment for Rent in** _____ Spacious apartment above Walnut Street salon. Easy access by bus to Oakland and Downtown. 2 BR, 2 bath, LR, large kitchen. $550 per month. NO Unfurnished. Utilities not incl. PETS!! Call 681-1844 for more info.

2. **Apartment for Rent in** _____ 2 BR apt. great for students. Close to local hospitals, PITT and CMU. Also near museum, conservatory, and lots of bars. $450/mo. All utilities included. Call 683-4186.

3. **House for Sale in** _____ Large Victorian home for sale. Great neighborhood to live in. Easy access to shopping in Bloomfield, Shadyside, and East Liberty. Asking $55,000. Call 361-7594 to set up appt. to view this house.

4. **Apartment for Rent in** _____ Apartment located above Italian grocery store. 2 bedrooms, large kitchen, 1 bath. All utilities included. Furnished. $375 a month. Call 621-1743.

5. **Apartment for Rent in** _____ Apartment on Wightman Street located 2 blocks from Murray Avenue. Unfurnished utilities extra. $700 a month. Call 422-1229 for more information.

6. **Apartment for Rent in** _____ New houses for rent in a developing area of the city. Near 2 new shopping centers. Easy access to Downtown. Prices vary [illegible] office at 232-4[illegible]

2. Reading activities

Skimming the headings

The next worksheet described each of the neighborhoods in paragraph form. (I had rewritten these printed materials to be more accessible to the students.) Students read the subtitles, which were names of the neighborhoods, and guessed the answers to oral questions like these: What do you think this text will be about? Are you very familiar with Pittsburgh neighborhoods? Where are these neighborhoods? Which one do you live in? etc.

Scanning (in pairs)

Students were asked to underline street names and circle the cost of renting an apartment or buying a house (answers were found for each neighborhood in each paragraph of the reading).

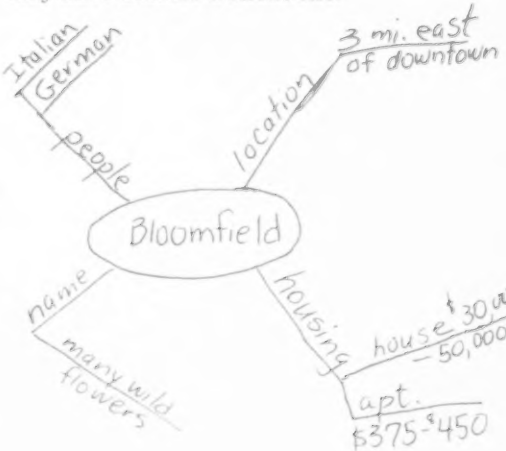
Next they were given a worksheet about classified ads, which they were asked to complete using the information they had circled in the text.

They filled in the blanks with the name of the neighborhood in which the house or apartment was most likely to be found. Other clues (besides cost) for the correct answer included telephone exchanges, street names and landmarks. This aspect was very important to the pair activity because I could hear them saying things like, "This is similar to my phone number so it must be..." or "I live near this street." Without those additional clues, the activity may have become a silent one.

Intensive reading

Together we read the first paragraph (on the description sheet) and organized the information into a 'spider map' drawn on a blank sheet of paper. Students completed one of these maps for each of the other paragraphs on their own, or in pairs.

Each paragraph contained similar types of information (for example, location in reference to a downtown point, origin of name, ethnic background, cost of living). The spider maps were later helpful in one of the post-reading activities (see next page).



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3. Post-reading activity

Writing—pair or individual work

I created two options for a post-reading activity. The first relates to a fictional letter written to me. The student reads the letter and must help me recommend a neighborhood the woman and her sick daughter should move to.

For this task, first the student completes a chart which lists the names of the neighborhoods as well as necessary facilities (hospital, concert hall, etc). After finding the best neighborhood, the student writes a letter to the woman with his or her recommendation.

Dear Mrs. Rebscher:

I need to move to Pittsburgh because my daughter was born blind and needs several operations.

I am a professional musician. I perform with a major symphony in my city in Poland. I also teach the piano to children. My English isn't too good; an American friend of mine is writing this letter for me. I don't have a lot of money.

Could you suggest an appropriate neighborhood for me to live in? Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,
Monika

TASK 1. Help me advise this woman! Find out which neighborhood has all of the things she needs. Use what you already know *and* the new information from the text.

NEIGHBORHOOD	HOSPITAL	CONCERT HALL	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	ESL CLASS	ETHNIC GROUP	COST OF LIVING
Bloomfield						
Friendship						
The Hill						
Squirrel Hill						
Shadyside						
Oakland						

TASK 2. Write a letter to this woman on a separate sheet of paper. Which neighborhood will you suggest for her? Why?

Speaking

The second option for a post-reading activity is a conversation with a partner about why he or she moved to Pittsburgh, the neighborhood he or she lives in, and where he or she would prefer to live.

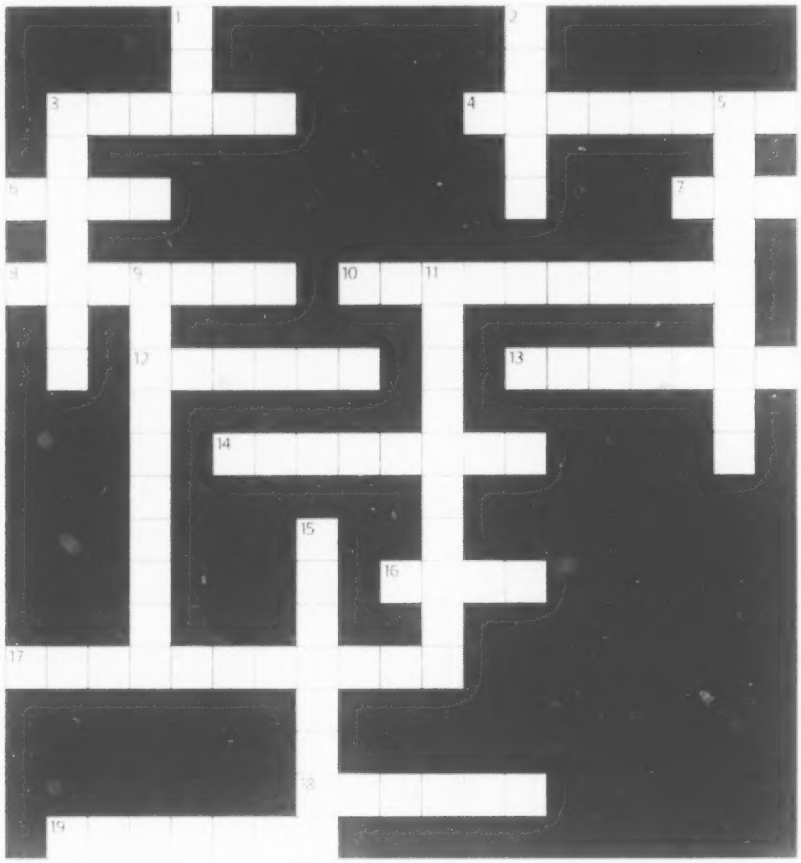
Interview your partner. Write his or her answers.

1. Why did you move to Pittsburgh?
2. What neighborhood are you living in?
3. Why did you choose that neighborhood?
4. Do you like living there?
5. (If yes) Why do you like it?

   (If no) Which neighborhood would you rather live in? Why?

Crossword puzzle:

Places in the neighborhood



Word list

Use this list for help with the puzzle. (But you have to unscramble the words, first!)

hatreet
rotse
toprira
stop fiofec
karp
nabk
tasnito
rab
restet
ozo
rapmycah
marptaten
bralryı
solcoh
ratseutran
gaprink tol
kledwasi
ccuhhr
tiplosha
muprektaser

Across clues

3. A place to learn
4. A place to get medical help
6. A place to keep your money
7. A place to drink beer
8. A place to get an airplane
10. A place to park your car
12. A place to drive your car
13. A place to see movies; a movie ____
14. A place to walk
16. a place to play outdoors
17. A place to buy food
18. A place to pray
19. A place to read

Down clues

1. A place to see animals
2. A place to buy things
3. A place to buy gas; a gas ____
5. A place to live
9. A place to mail letters
11. A place to eat
15. A place to buy medicine

Hints & tips:

Ideas for large classes—a treasure trove

We've received a wealth of ideas from readers about teaching large classes. Since many instructors are telling us their classes are getting larger, we thought we'd share these gems with you.

Management techniques

***Sue Sandeen**, Adult ESOL instructor at Loften Center in Gainesville, Florida, shares some of her tips:*

• **Plan on more management and less teaching.** Let go and let your students take more responsibility and leadership.

• **Set up a routine and stick to it.** It will be easier to get an activity going if students are familiar with the tasks. For example, we often have students write dictation on the chalkboard—they know that in a few minutes they will pass the chalk to someone else. This reduces explanation time and increases the time spent focussing on language.

Set up a regular schedule of homework, and when projects are due. Journals are always due on Tuesday, for example. In and Out baskets on the teacher's desk make it simple for absentees to pick up or turn in work when they return to class.

•**Enforce classroom rules more rigidly.** Two late students in a class of 15 can be managed, but four late students in a class of 30 equals chaos! Establish a ritual for the first 5–10 minutes of class that will grab everybody's attention. Be firm about tardiness.

• **Move from quiet to noisy.** Plan a daily schedule which begins with whole class (relatively quiet) activities, followed by controlled speaking activities and pair work, and finally the noisy crescendo: small-group discussions, games, etc.

• **Move from simple to complicated in classroom setup.** In my classes, we always begin with the horseshoe arrangement. Small group discussions, which necessitate a rearrangement of chairs or desks, are carefully scheduled for the last part of the session. Once students have settled into small groups, it's close to impossible to return to a whole-group or pair activity.

• **Use a whistle** (or other noisemaker). I have a very loud P.E.-coach-type whistle. The first time I use it, my students are dumbfounded, but it works. I blow the whistle to end small group discussions and to remind students that class is over.

• **Make use of aides, volunteers and visiting native speakers.** Aides can check homework and help monitor group work. Volunteers can help individual students, especially newcomers, adapt to the class. Visitors can participate in small-group discussions, enriching the students' experience and giving them a chance to talk with another native speaker.

• **Give students management tasks.** In my classes, students take turns managing coffee breaks (collecting contributions, making coffee and tea, buying supplies, etc.). Students also hand out and collect homework, introduce newcomers and help with late registrations, and even help with the state-mandated testing. Students also take care of our small in-class lending library; they keep track of class sets of textbooks.

These 'jobs' can be passed to another student at intervals, and student aides can train their replacements.

• **Give students custodial tasks**, where these services are not provided. Until last year in my program, student volunteers swept the floor and cleaned classroom furniture. Every morning, students still have to set up tables and chairs and chalkboards, and every afternoon they must put everything away.

• **Use hand-written notes for student feedback.** I use an old-fashioned receipt book, the sort which makes a carbon copy. When I see that a student needs to review or practice a particular point, I note it in the receipt book, with suggestions for practice. I begin each 'receipt' with a positive comment. The student gets the carbon, which goes in his or her portfolio when the task is completed. I keep the originals as a record of what needs to be worked on. These notes are useful for lesson-planning, as well as providing a record of student progress.

• **Get management tips from your students!** Our ESL classes seem small compared to English classes the students attended in their home countries. Your students might be able to give you some ideas from their experience.

More ideas for large classes:

Language activities

Many teachers have told us that larger language classes create more possibilities—more opportunities for talk, more opinions, more action and interaction, and more independence from the students. Sue Sandeen comments there are more opportunities to form friendships in larger classes. Speaking activities are much more realistic in larger groups, and real debates become possible.

Here in the U.S. we have traditionally not been accustomed to using a large-class format except for lecture presentations. But in other countries—Japan, Pakistan, India, Great Britain just for example—the format is more fully exploited for all of the benefits it can provide. (We have heard there is research being done into large-class language learning at some British universities.)

• **Rotate partners, "Virginia reel" style, for conversation practice.** Alice A. Harman, in an online discussion on TESL-L, told how she got her students in Japan to practice beginning English conversation. The students were seated in pairs, in long rows. The partners on one side were called "a," on the other "b."

She had them ask and answer six questions that were put on the board for practice. For example:

1. What's your name?
2. Where are you from?
3. What's your major?
4. How old are you?
5. When is your birthday?
6. What are you interested in?

After the students had practiced this, she had everybody in row "a" get up and move forward one seat; the person in front moved to the back of the room. Then, with their new partners, they practiced the same set of questions. Later, everyone in each row moved across the aisle and started again with a whole new set of partners.

Once the students became familiar with the questions, Alice also tried erasing parts of the questions from the board, so students relied less and less on the written cues. This activity will work with any level of students, as long as you pick questions they are interested in.

• **Use your students' expertise as resource and as discussion topics.** Sue Sandeen writes to us, "Adult classes are made up of people who know a lot—about almost everything. In a large class someone's sure to know about the special sale at the mall or where to find a good deal on a used car, or how to deal with a difficult child.

"Ask for a recipe for rice and you'll get 8 experts. What's the difference between a butterfly and a moth? What's the formula fro converting Celsius into Fahrenheit? You may be sure that someone in a large adult class knows the answer."

One way to get at this expertise is to use an interview technique. (See for example the 'One question interview' by Fiona Armstrong in Vol. II, No. 1, p. 6 of *Hands-on English*.)

• **Have students read and discuss a text in a small group as preparation for a whole-class discussion or writing.** We received this very interesting description from Judy Gex, who spent a year teaching in Africa:

"This past year I taught a writing class with 127 students and a listening class that was a little bit bigger at the National University of Benin. For the listening class, I gave out books and handouts to trios of students, with the middle one being responsible for holding the material so the two on either side could see and participate.

"Another American literature class with 65+ members read five books using this technique. Students handed in reading response papers to me, after they had used them for conducting their own group discussions of their reading. We were able to read and digest a lot more by having these small group discussions going on."

Language activities, cont'd.

• Have students write their conversations before speaking.

Judy Gex, instructor at LaGuardia Community College in New York, passed along this technique to us. She got the idea from an article by John Fanselow called "No talk without chalk" (published in the journal *Practical English Teaching*, December 1992).

In his article, John Fanselow describes teaching a large English conversation class in Japan. Because the students couldn't understand him, he got the idea to have students ask him questions by first writing the question on the chalkboard. He would then respond by writing his answer on the chalkboard as well. All of the students copied the conversation in their notebooks as it went along, and corrections were made.

Once an entire conversation between students and teacher was recorded, they used the script to have the conversation orally. The students could speak with confidence because they had notes, and all could understand what was being said.

Scrambled answers

Judy used this concept in her teaching in Benin. She writes:

"It was a very effective way in both large and small classes to get everyone understanding. For a speaking class, I had the students get in small groups to come up with five questions they had always wanted to ask an American.

"They gave me their questions and I took them home and wrote out answers. I typed up all of their questions, and on a separate sheet I typed the answers but in scrambled order.

"The next week, the students worked together to put the correct answers with the questions. There was a lot of talking and reading going on. Finally, they could find the correct answers from a key hanging on the wall, or by listening to the questions and answers on an audiotape.

"This activity generated a lot of other discussion of the issues brought up in the questions the students had asked."

Common ground

What *Hands-on English* really likes about both versions of this activity is that it puts all the students on an equal footing. Everyone has a chance to understand (or study) all of the language that is generated by the class. So beginning students in a multi-level class, for example, have a chance to learn from their more advanced classmates.

Having a written record of a conversation with your students provides a great opportunity for review exercises, too—dictations, fill-in-the blanks, etc. Let your imagination run wild!

Tutors, too!

The above activity will work very well in a one-on one tutoring session, or in a small-group session. In a sense, it is the exact opposite of the 'language experience story' technique which many literacy tutors are trained to use. In that technique, students use the oral language they already have to tell a story, which the tutor transcribes; then students practice their reading skills by reading their own story.

This technique, however, has the students use their writing and reading skills to help them improve their speaking. The write-before-speaking technique is especially useful for more advanced ESOL students who already know some English but who speak with errors. Writing the conversation first helps them to slow down, reflect carefully and correct errors first before beginning to speak.

Try this with your student:

1. Tell the student that for the next 10 minutes (longer for more advanced students) neither of you can speak. Put your watch or a clock out where you both can see it.
2. Now take out some sheets of blank paper. At the top of one sheet, write a message to your student. You can write: "We can write messages but we can't speak. Do you want to ask me a question?"
3. Hand the paper to the student and give him or her a chance to respond. Keep trading the paper as you both write.
4. After the time has elapsed, announce that you both can speak again. Now take turns reading the conversation aloud.
5. Turn over the paper and repeat the conversation without reading (you can peek if you need to, though).

Online opportunities:
Netsurfing ESL

by **Meg Gam**, ESL teacher in New York City

This time around, there is a hodge-podge of goodies and places for the intrepid "net-surfing" ESL teacher to explore.

Government aid

The Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center in Monterey, CA has a bulletin board and a website with lots and lots of language learning freeware and shareware for the downloading. (Shareware is software that you can try before you buy—although you can get it for free, you're supposed to pay for it eventually, by mailing in your fee to get a registered copy; freeware is software that you don't have to pay for at all, such as the software at CELIA.)

If you have World-Wide Web access, you can get to DLIFLC at:
http://lingnet.army.mil

You can also **telnet** to the bulletin board at the telnet address:
lingnet.army.mil

(to telnet to a site, at your prompt, you type in telnet, then leave a space, then type in the address. When you connect, you're asked to log in, much the same as when you log on to your Internet provider. You'll be given pretty clear instructions on how to do so once you connect.)

Yahoo!

Yahoo has a very interesting ESL website, which is basically a one-stop shop with all kinds of connections to other places of interest to ESL teachers. The URL (otherwise known as the address) is:

http://yahoo.com/Education/Languages/English_as_a_Second_Language

Frequently asked questions

One concrete, useful thing that you can get from the Internet is the Frequently Asked Questions (or **FAQ**) file for the newsgroup:
misc.education.language.english
This fairly lengthy file contains all sorts of information of use to ESL/EFL teachers, as well as pointers to other Internet stops of interest to ESL/EFL teachers. The FAQ is available at Linguistics Funland:
http://math.unr.edu/linguistics/mele.faq.html

Or, it is available by anonymous ftp at:
math.unr.edu in the directory:
/users/kristina/mele-faq.txt

You can also get this FAQ by plain vanilla email, by sending a blank email message with the subject line "m.e.l.e FAQ" to: teacher@amanda.dorsai.org

Internet Education

Now, I've been talking about WWW, ftp, and telnet, and it just may be that you've been scratching your head, wondering how you'll ever learn what all those things are and how to use them.

Aha! There is a collection of "lesson" files called Roadmap, which you can get by email and follow, to learn how to do all these things and more. The best thing is that the lessons are free! You can get Roadmap by sending an email request (with a blank subject line) to:
LISTSERV@UA1VM.UA.EDU
with the command:
GET ROADMAP SYLLABUS F=MAIL

This will fetch you the syllabus document for the Roadmap lessons, which explains how to get the rest of the Roadmap lessons (and what they contain) so you can get started learning about gopher, Archie, Veronica, telnet, ftp, irc, and dozens of other things to do on the Internet.

Teach yourself

The nice part about the Roadmap lessons is that they are written very simply, so that if you have eyes to read, you can understand them effortlessly. Many of them are designed to be done step-by-step as you sit at the computer. (How do you think I learned how to do Internet?)

News & notes

Upcoming conferences

◆ March 26-30, 1996—**Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)** international conference in Chicago, Illinois. Contact TESOL, tel: 703-836-0074, fax: 703-836-7864.

◆ April 21–23, 1996—**National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL)** annual conference in Louisville, Kentucky. Fax: 502-584-0172.

◆ May 16-18, 1996—**Commission on Adult Basic Education (COABE)** national conference in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Contact COABE, tel: 412-481-4836.

◆ June 13-16, 1996—**Laubach Literacy Action** biennial conference in Portland, Oregon. Contact LLA at 315-422-9121.

Funding issues

Hands-on English would love to be keeping you informed of the latest changes in funding and legislation affecting education in the U.S. Things change a little too fast, however, for our notices to be current.

We *can* tell you that educational organizations and literacy groups are calling on all of us to prepare for "block grants" to the states. Block grants will give each state more discretion in how to spend federal funds for adult education, vocational and job training. The possible effects of these grants will be reduced funding and unfortunate competition between programs for the smaller pool of dollars. It is also possible that ESL/ESOL may fall through the cracks where funding is short.

No matter what happens in your state, it is going to become more important for your program to demonstrate employment-related results.

Other issues

Other current issues of importance to the ESL community are the Immigration Reform Act (whose effects may limit access to higher education for immigrant students) and the Official English bill (which many fear will encourage discrimination against non-English speakers).

To find out how you can make your voice heard, contact your nearest Adult Education program, literacy organization or TESOL affiliate.

Classified ads

To place a classified ad, send your notice of 30 words or less with US $10 to: Hands-on English, P.O. Box 256, Crete, NE 68333 USA. Fax: 402-826-3997. Phone: 402-826-5426. Toll free call-in 1-800-ESL-HAND.

Publications:

All About Deafness, a resource guide by Salvatore J. Parlato, 1995, softcover, 76 pages, $9.95. Mr. Parlato is offering a special price of $7.95 (includes postage) for *Hands-on English* readers (The offer expires April 30, 1996). To order, send your name and address with payment to: Dolores Parlato, 248 Seville Dr, Rochester, NY 14617.

Money; Exploring the Ways We Use It. An intermediate 'vocabureader' by Raymond C. Clark. A high-interest overview of financial practices and the language needed to understand them. Includes charts and forms. $10.50. ISBN 0-86647-029-8. ***Pro Lingua Associates. 800-366-4775.***

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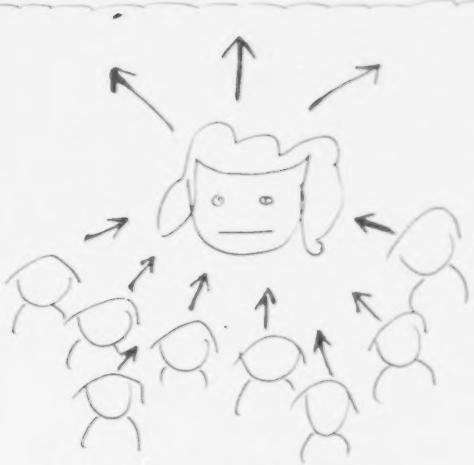
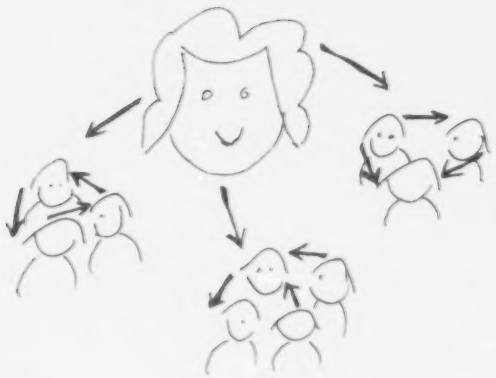
Prep Time

A problem—



Abbie Tom says teachers get worn out from all the "rays" we're receiving—all the students' different needs—and all the "rays" we're sending out

A solution?



Become a coordinator of activities in which students help each other learn

Hands-on
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A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult ESL
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Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

Letters ....page 3

Minigrant report: A student-written ESL brochure ....page 4

Tools & techniques: A conversation map ....page 6

Grammar grab-bag: Using archeology to teach *might have been* ....page 7

Multi-level crossword puzzle: Summertime ....page 8

From the field: A student's poem ....page 10

Editorial: Birdwatchers and ESL ....page 11

Hints & tips ....page 12

On the market Reviews of two new books ....page 13

News & notes ....page 14

Idea file:
Vocabulary sorting game

Here's a vocabulary game that can be fun to play. You can use it as warm-up or for review, and it can be a quick activity or one the students can spend some time on. You can adapt it to any level.

How to do it

The game is simple to play. Have the students divide into small groups—3 or 4 in each group is best. Give each group one piece of paper with a line drawn vertically down the middle. Then announce to the whole class the two categories that will be used for this round. (For example, *fruit* and *vegetable*.) Students write these categories at the top of each column.

Next, the students brainstorm together as a group to come up with a list of words for each category. If they are beginning level students, it might be best to have them think of 10 words for each category. If they are intermediate or advanced students, give them a period of time (5 minutes?) to see how many words or phrases they can come up with.

Give each group points for the number of correct words they came up with.

Name the category

Next, have someone from each group read aloud the words from their paper, but chosen randomly. The rest of the class has to decide which category each word fits. For example, "banana" belongs under "fruit." This part of the activity can be done either informally, with students calling out the answers, or in writing, with the students individually writing each word on a piece of paper, in the appropriate column.

Finding the topics

The key to success in this activity is finding categories interesting enough to challenge the students and that are appropriate for their level. Some possibilities include:

fruit/vegetable	defense/prosecution
adult/child	amateur/professional
legal/illegal	Democrat/Republican
ocean/land	
past/present	

Or, any categories that relate to work the students have been doing in class.

Discussion starter

This exercise would be interesting as the warm-up activity before a discussion or a reading on almost any topic. You could also use it after a lesson, as a review of a story the students have read or a movie they have watched. The categories could be names of two characters from the story. For example, if they have read "Adventures of Tom Sawyer," have the students brainstorm words or phrases about "Tom" and "Huck."

Why it works

The game is simple to prepare and present. It is student oriented and uses student input as classroom material. It is a good intermediate use of new vocabulary in a limited context.

Tutors, too

Tutors working in a one-on-one situation can make good use of this idea, though naturally without the 'contest' aspect of it. You can ask the student to brainstorm some words while you write them down on the list. Then when the list is complete, you give the same words back to the student in the form of a quiz-style dictation. The student has to decide which column to write the word in. This exercise should be a success experience for the student!

(see our "Idea file" card on page 16.)

Hands-on English

Volume VI, Number 1
May/June 1996

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About the publication

Hands-on English has been helping teachers and tutors with practical teaching ideas since 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who taught ESL to adults in many different settings, and is familiar with the fun and the challenges involved.

Our articles and ideas are contributed by experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have an article or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

About our Minigrants program

Hands-on English awards a few small grants (of $200 each) annually for practical classroom projects. Applications are due April 30, and are available upon request.

Your editor, Anna Silliman, hopes you will share some of your teaching ideas with our readers. We'd like to hear from you!

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Letters

Note of thanks

We'd like to thank all of our readers who renewed their subscriptions early, taking advantage of our special offer. Your flood of orders kept us hopping in the last few weeks! We appreciate your support.

No rest for this retiree!

"Thank you for the time and effort you put into *Hands-on English*. I appreciate the paper very much.

"I'm a 70 year old retired elementary school teacher, now disabled due to four hip surgeries. I trained for tutoring at the Miami Valley Literacy Council in Dayton, Ohio three years ago.

"I have three students—two Korean and one Egyptian—whom I teach one-to-one. I average 24 tutoring hours a month. I need not tell you about preparation time. And I love every minute of it!

"After Young Sik got a bread machine and had many questions for me, we baked together. Now she's comfortable with yeast and gluten and molasses, and level measurements. Even "level" was a new word!

"Your help is important to me. Thank you!"

Sincerely,

Ferne E. Neeb
Kettering, Ohio

Too bad Ohio is so far away...I'd like some bread-making lessons too!

Don't hit the hearse

"Recently I had a personal experience which prompted a discussion at one of our weekly English conversation group sessions. I would like to share it with you, in hopes you can provide a forum to share with your readers.

"We were driving from the church to the cemetery in a funeral procession of a family member who had died a few days before. Like all funeral processions in the U.S., each car had a flag on it, courtesy of the funeral home. As we approached the first intersection with a traffic light, the hearse and the cars following it drove through.

"Before all of the cars cleared the intersection, the light turned red. The driver of the first vehicle at the cross street saw the light turn green for his lane of traffic and stepped on the gas to proceed, crashing into one of the cars in the funeral procession.

"The driver who caused the accident was from Iran, and had never heard of giving the right-of-way to members of a funeral procession. This was an unfortunate incident which could have been avoided, if the foreign-born driver had been a better informed driver.

"I'm hoping the ESL tutors who read your newsletter will be able to discuss this part of the American way of death with their students/learners, in order to avoid a repeat of this accident."

Sincerely,

Sharon R. Moor
Community Services Program
Bowling Green, Ohio

Not to mention looking both ways before entering an intersection, right?

Grateful renewer

"I was so happy to find your publication a few years ago. It has filled a void for so many of us—I share my copies with friends and some now have their own subscriptions.

Thanks for the help. Bravo for being so courageous in the first place. And keep up the good work."

Sincerely,

Lynda Molnár
Greenville, South Carolina

And thank you for helping to spread the word about Hands-on. With readers like you, who needs advertising?

Minigrants '95 award winner:

A student-written ESL brochure

*by **Kristin Kucia-Stauder**, ESL Instructor at Boone County Adult Learning Center in Florence, Kentucky.*

Reaching out

The purpose of this project was to produce an informational brochure about the free ESL program in Boone County, in order to distribute it to prospective students in the community. Since the international population is rapidly increasing in Kentucky, there is a need to have some printed information about this community service.

The current ESL students wrote and designed the brochure themselves with guidance from the instructors. Coordinating this project took some careful planning, because students from six different classes were involved! The result is a brochure the students can be proud of, that reflects their priorities and their understanding of the needs of the international community.

How they did it

1. Discussion—The instructors first introduced the project and concepts orally. The students looked at some other brochures and discussed why they were useful, why people read them and how people get them.

2. Brainstorming on paper—Next, the instructors reintroduced the project in written form. (See handout.) The students talked about what is helpful on a brochure, what their questions were when they were searching for an ESL class and how to express this information in the simplest manner.

3. Compiling ideas—After the students had finished brainstorming on the handout, the instructors typed out all their ideas onto one list and presented this to the students. The students then discussed the advantages and disadvantages of including and deleting different information, maps, pictures, etc. in the brochure. Then, they voted on what should be included in the brochure.

4. Layout—The instructors made a mock layout of the brochure. They asked the students for their opinions and suggestions. The brochure was adjusted accordingly. Again, the students voted on their favorite layout.

5. Production—When all of the students were satisfied with the copy, the instructors took the layout to the printer. It was finally presented to the students at their end of the year luncheon, with a round of applause.

A success

This project has been very timely in that we have twice as many classes as last year, and we expect the numbers to keep rising. We are already receiving many requests for printed information on the ESL classes. We appreciate *Hands-on English* so much for helping to make this possible.

This handout was used to help the students to brainstorm:

ESL BROCHURE

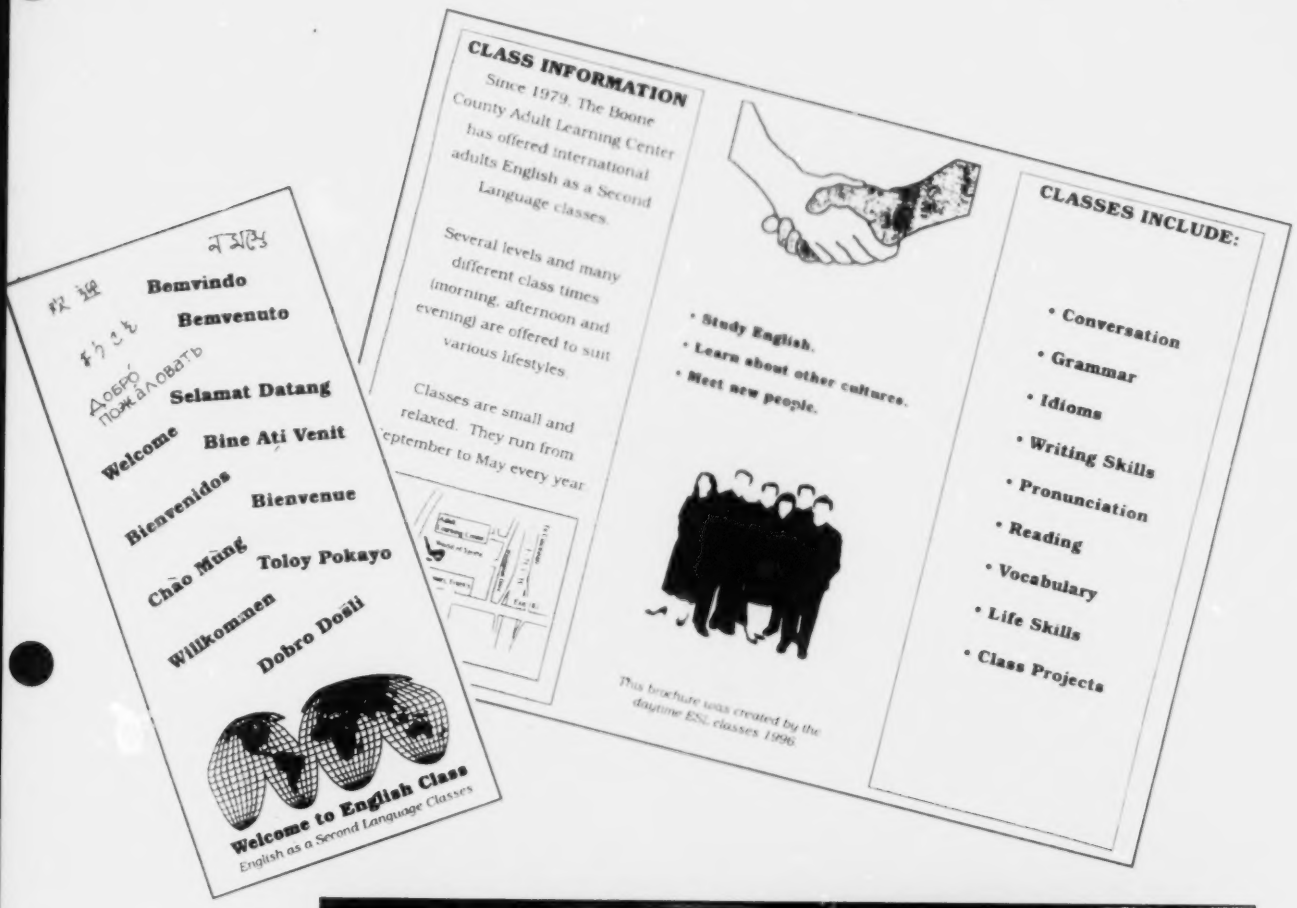
We are creating an ESL brochure, and we want your help!! What should it say? What information is important to a person looking for an ESL program? What information is useful? How can we present our program to the international population of Northern Kentucky?

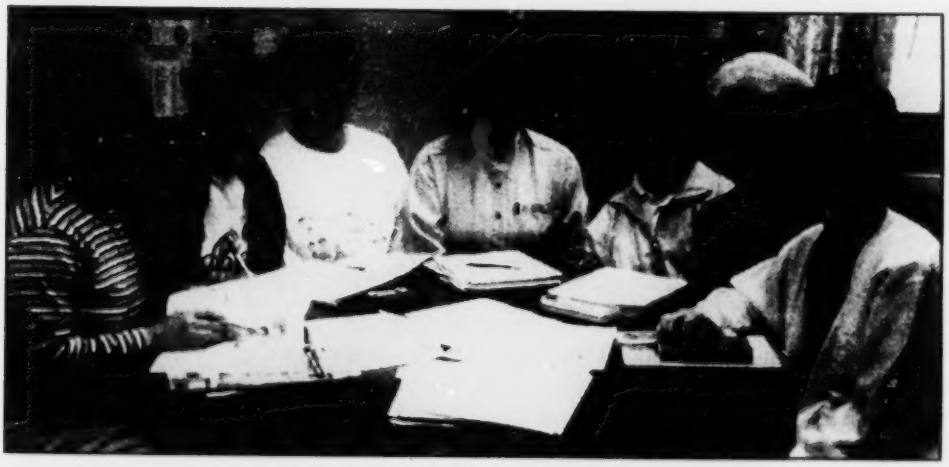
What should the cover look like? What words could we use to translate into many languages?

Please tell us your opinions. Please use the front and back of this page to give us you comments and suggestions.

Editor's note: You might consider trying this activity in your own program! It gives the students a chance to contribute something, as well as to help prospective students get the information they need.

ESL brochure, continued





Here are some of the students who contributed to the ESL brochure.

Tools & techniques:

A conversation map

by ***Carol R. Janiga,*** *Educator for Salt Lake County Aging Services, Salt Lake City, Utah.*

I have been teaching ESL for over four years. As an employee of Salt Lake County Aging Services, my classes are almost exclusively attended by adults over 55. Since these elders will not be working, their language needs include vocabulary building and conversation.

One of the tools I use to meet these needs I call a conversation map. I use it with students who already have some foundation in verbs and sentence making.

How to do it

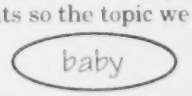
Choose a topic of interest. Ask for words the students can relate to this topic. Add some new vocabulary, too. (I frequently use the New Oxford Picture Dictionary to help with this.) Chart these words on the board, grouping them if necessary by category.

Then, take each word and make a sentence. Make questions out of the sentences. Create a situation in which this vocabulary can be used and create a conversation. Have the students do a role play of this situation.

My students enjoy the interaction of this process and it gives them ready phrases and questions to use. Here is an example:

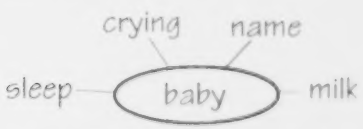
Step 1—Choose a topic.

Hong and Nam recently became grandparents so the topic we chose was 'baby.'

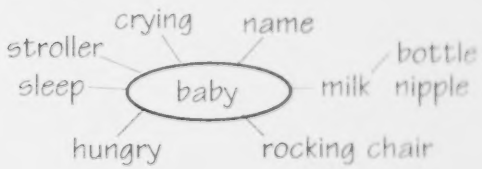


Step 2—Students give known words about the topic.

Write these on the board as the students suggest them.



Step 3—Some new vocabulary is added.



Step 4— Create sentences from the vocabulary. Examples:

The baby is hungry.

The baby's name is Ryan.

I feed the baby in the rocking chair.

Step 5— Change sentences to questions.

Is the baby hungry?

What is the baby's name?

Can you feed the baby in the rocking chair?

Step 6—Choose a conversational situation.

Example: The neighbor has a new baby. Hong and Nam meet the neighbor at the store.

Step 7—Create a conversation.

Hong: Hi, how are you? How is the new baby?

Neighbor: He is fine.

Nam: What's his name?

Neighbor: His name is Michail Justin.

Hong: How old is he?

Neighbor: He is 3 months old.

Hong: Does he sleep all night?

Neighbor: Not yet, but my wife gets up with him.

Nam: Do you take him out in the stroller?

Neighbor: Yes, I take him in the stroller on Saturdays. I'll bring him over to your house so you can see him.

Hong: Good. I like babies, and we have a present for him.

Step 8—Do a role play of the conversation.

Students can work together in small groups on this.

Some other activities you could use include sequencing (scramble the sentences and have students put them back in order) and writing other conversations using the same topic and vocabulary.

Grammar grab-bag:
"It must have been used for cooking."

might be
might have been
must be
must have been

by ***Pat Syme****, Hagley Community College, Christchurch, New Zealand.*

We met Pat Syme by chance at the Chicago TESOL conference this March, and were delighted when she shared this activity with us!

Using 'might' and 'must' to speculate

Upper-intermediate or advanced students will need to learn to use modals to speculate about the present and the past. For example, "Who's on the phone? It *might be* Fred; he said he would call." Or, "Who was here earlier? I don't know. It *might have been* Fred; he promised he'd stop by."

This structure may seem difficult or artificial to teach, especially in the past tense, but here is a perfect context to teach it naturally—a lesson on archeology!

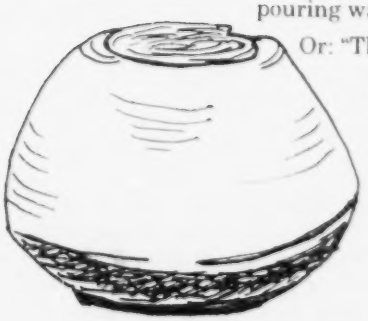
A unit on Pompeii

If you have an archeological site near you, perhaps you can get photos or pamphlets of the artifacts there. If not, find an article about a famous site such as Pompeii (the *National Geographic* is one good source for articles with pictures). News reports, such as the raising of the Titanic, can also provide material for this activity.

Make some good copies of the the artifacts, in color if possible. (The higher the quality of the photo, the more interesting it will be to talk about it.) Cut the pictures out and mount them on cardboard. You may want to laminate them as well. Number each picture.

Now, the students have to guess what the artifacts could be and what they might have been used for.

For example: "This must be a water container. It must have been used for pouring water."



Or: "This might be an oven. It might have been used for baking food."

Grammar note: Use *must be* for something that exists today (it still is a water container). Use *must have been* for past use (it's not being used for that now).

Follow up

This grammar lesson can be combined with a reading about the archeological site. If it is a local site, the students could take a trip there and write about their impressions of the place. This could be an opportunity to learn some interesting local history.

Our students visited a local site which had been a prison colony. Most places have their own interesting archeology which relates to local history.

Why it works

One nice aspect of this activity is that we are not sure of the answers—the students have to use their detective abilities to guess about the past. And, they also have to explain the logic of their reasoning.

The teacher's past life

Here's another idea for practicing these same grammar structures:

Bring some photos from a previous job, a country you used to live in, your childhood, your family, etc. Number the photos. Have the students look at the photos and guess:

–the place (e.g., "It must be Canada.")

–time/date/season ("It must have been summer.")

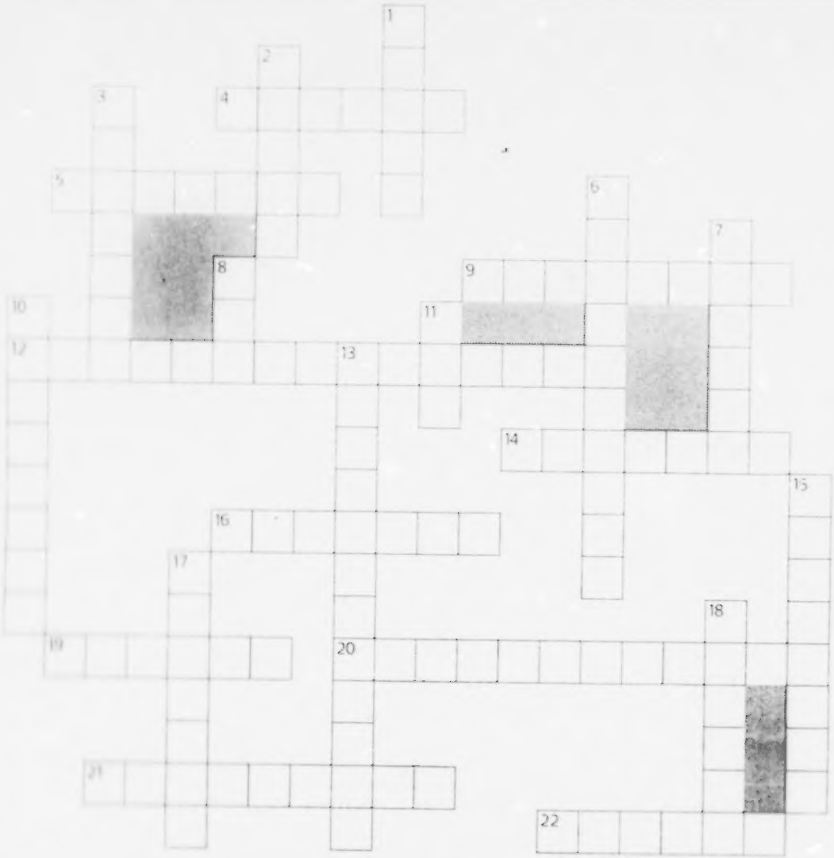
–occasion ("It must have been a class picnic.")

–about people ("He must be her brother.")

The students should also be prepared to justify their guesses with an explanation. If you like, you can award points for correct guesses, or for those who get closest to the correct answer.

Grammar note: Use *must be* for things that remain true; *must have been* for past action.

Multi-level crossword puzzle:
Summertime



Word list:

air conditioning
August
baseball
fan
fireworks
flowers
fourth
green
grill
hot
iced tea
longer
part time
picnic
playground
sandals
sunburn
swimming suit
thunderstorm
travel
vacation
weather

Level B (harder)

Across clues

4. go on a trip
5. shoes for summer
9. time off from work
12. a cooling system for your home
14. beautiful plants in summer
16. a cold beverage
19. a party outdoors
20. what you wear to swim
21. nighttime celebration
22. a U.S. holiday in July

Down clues

1. a summer color
2. a way to cook meat
3. news about the temperature
6. a place for children to play
7. opposite of shorter
8. a machine to make you feel cooler
10. a summer sport
11. opposite of cold
13. dangerous weather
15. not full time
17. too much sun on your skin
18. the hottest month

Tips for the instructor: This puzzle actually provides you with *four* levels of difficulty, because you can offer the word list to students who need it. We suggest photocopying this page and the clues on the next page, then cutting them up into sections. Give each student (or pair of students if they are working together) a copy of the puzzle, and let them choose which level of clues to try. Keep the word list handy or offer it as an easier alternative. The most satisfying approach for students may be to do the puzzle twice, first at Level A, then Level B.

Level A (easier)

Across clues

4. In the summer, many people like to _____ with their families. They visit relatives and friends, or go to see famous places.
5. Many people like to wear _____ on their feet in the summer, instead of shoes. Their feet feel much cooler.
9. My husband is taking five days _____ from work next week, so we are going to visit my sister.
12. "Do you have ___ _____ in your home?" "No, I don't. It's very hot where I live, but I only have a fan."
14. "Look at the beautiful red _____ in the park! What kind are they?" "Those are roses."
16. ___ _____ is a cold drink that many people like to have in the summer. It's usually not sweet, but you can put sugar in it.
19. Our class is having a _____ on Saturday. Meet us in the park at noon, and bring some food.
20. "Would you like to go swimming with us?" "Not today. I don't have my _____ _____."
21. In the U.S. you can see _____ at night on the 4th of July. Some people go to a park or stadium to see them. Sometimes you can see them on T.V.
22. Independence Day is a U.S. holiday to celebrate the beginning of the country. It is also called the "_____ of July."

Down clues

1. I like summer because the trees are _____ and everything looks fresh.
2. In the summer, some people like to cook their food outdoors, on a _____.
3. "Did you hear the _____ report?" "Yes—they said it's going to rain tonight."
6. "Where are the children?" "They went outside to play on the swings. They're at the _____."
7. In the summer, the days are _____ than in the winter.
8. Air conditioning is nice, but a _____ is much cheaper.
10. "Do you like to watch _____ games?" "Yes, I watch them on T.V., and sometimes I go to the stadium to see a live game."
11. In many places in North America, the weather is very _____ in the summer.
13. "I couldn't sleep last night because of the big _____." "Yes, and the lightning was really scary!"
15. In the summer, many high school students look for ___ _____ jobs because they have some free time.
17. Yesterday I was outside for four hours, and today I have a _____. My arms and face are red.
18. In many parts of North America, _____ is the hottest month of the year.

Follow-up

Fill in the missing words in this letter.

Dear Sasha,

We are having a wonderful summer, and I wish you were here! The weather is not too _____. We haven't used the _____ _____ yet. On the _____ of July we went to the park and had a big _____ with some friends. We cooked chicken on the _____ and it was delicious! In the evening we saw some beautiful _____. The children were really excited.

If you can take some _____ from work, I hope you'll come for a visit. Bring your _____ _____ because there is a pool nearby. You can go swimming every day. I hope to see you soon!

Your cousin, Eva

From the field:
A student's poem

This poem was sent to us from the YWCA Intercultural Service Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma. This program sponsors ESL classes at numerous sites.

The author, Galina Mikhailova, comes from the former USSR. Her teacher, Fernanda Thompson, says that Galina's writing is more advanced than her speaking.

Inspiration

We thought your students might enjoy reading this poem. They might also like to try writing a poem themselves. Even beginning students can create one, with your encouragement!

The Spring

by Galina Mikhailova

Now it's spring time.
The spring time months are:
March, April and May.
The days become longer
and the nights shorter.
The sun shines more brightly.
The sky is clear.
The air is warm and sweet.
The birds come back
and begin to sing their songs.
The trees are green.
The people take out their summer clothes.
They smile and they are happy.
Everybody starts watering their grass
in the mornings and in the evenings.
The green grass appears early.
In the spring nature looks younger.
The ground wakes up.
The lake waters become warm.
Soon we have spring break.
We have a rest and our teacher too.

Editorial:

Not just for the birds

Nature lovers

Somehow, we recently got on a mailing list for a regional bird watchers' organization. (Our own bird expertise is only at an elementary level, unfortunately—bluejays are blue, cardinals are red, we *think*.) We were amazed in looking through this birders' newsletter to see what a wealth of activities this group coordinates. Bird-watching, apparently, is no passive sport!

In addition to tips on birds, the publication also describes field trips (guided by volunteers), lectures, ongoing volunteer work in restoring habitat, news on endangered species, legislative action, letter-writing campaigns, literary events, research projects, and the sharing of experiences and skills. (Don't these people have regular jobs??) And all of these activities are relayed with a very high level of energy, excitement and enthusiasm.

A model for teachers

We started thinking what a nice model this group could be for us in our own currently somewhat tired, deflated profession. Wouldn't it be nice if we were all sharing tips with each other? Taking field trips to each others' programs? Keeping lists and photos of our favorite experiences? And most of all, having *fun*?

Birds of a feather

There is an interesting similarity in the pursuits of birders and of ESL teachers. At this historical point, we both seem to be a quirky minority, our goals misunderstood by the general public. Yet, birders seem undaunted—in fact, they seem to revel in this role. Why can't we? Like them, we shouldn't let the lack of public support or funding discourage us in the work we love to do, and that we believe in.

Love of diversity

Our ESL profession overlaps in yet another way with birding enthusiasts—the celebration of diversity is primary! Just as birders delight in the diversity they see in nature, wouldn't it by nice if everyone delighted in the rich linguistic diversity we have around us, instead of viewing it as a "problem"?

Imagine if everyone felt that diversity makes us richer!

Are you having *fun*?

Tell us what makes your ESL work fun and we'll publish a list in our next issue.

Thank you!

Hints & tips

Building a better wheel

In our Jan/Feb 1996 issue, we published a gizmo called a "verb wheel" for students to practice their irregular verb forms. We got a lot of feedback about the verb wheel, and many people said they found it useful. ***Linda Holden****, ESL instructor at the College of Lake County in Grayslake, Illinois writes:*

"I made the verb wheels and my class really liked them. You might be interested to know I made some modifications which, I think, probably prolong the longevity of the wheels. I made both the bottom & top wheels out of cardboard stock to give them more rigidity. I covered the bottom wheel with clear contact paper so that my students could write on them with special pens (overhead pens work), so they'd be able to erase the verbs and put in new ones at some later date.

"Finally, when I put the wheels together, I put hole reinforcers around the hole on the top wheel (on both sides) to minimize the wear and tear on the hole as students turn the wheel around. It worked very well in class when I finally got it all together, although it took a long time to make 19 of them!"

Fly swatter game

Marcia Lane*, ESL instructor at INTERLINK Language Center/Colorado School of Mines sends this lively suggestion:*

"You need two fly swatters, of different colors, and a black or white board at the front of the room. Before you begin to play, write on the board whatever it is you want to drill or practice (for example, pairs of words for pronunciation practice, vocabulary words or even math).

"Have someone (teacher or student) say a word on the board and the players see who can swat the word first. I often have each pair do the best three of five and then change to another set of players.

"For example, I write pairs on the board such as bear & pear, beep & peep, bee & pea, etc., and the observing students take turns reading one word each while the players swat the word they think they hear each time. The exercise checks the pronunciation of the speaker and the listening ability of the players."

Editor's note: Marcia's fly swatter game would be great for practicing those pesky numbers, like 200 – 2,000 – 20,000 – 200,000 etc. (We'd love to see this one in action!)

Use local newspaper

Marjorie Lichtenwalter*, literacy tutor for the Literacy Coalition in Rochester, Indiana writes:*

"I find the newspaper an excellent source to improve the student's vocabulary. Articles on school activities, current news that they hear on T.V., and *especially* items about their native country. Very often reading the newspaper article they will become enthused because they are reminded of an experience they had in their native country. This results in sharing their experience with me, and using their conversational skills.

"Our local newspaper, the Rochester Sentinel, gives every student of ESL a daily paper free of charge. I think that is real nice."

Oldy but goldy

Barbara Huppauf*, ESL teacher at NYANA in New York City, writes:*

"I would like to remind your readers of a true oldie that is fabulous because it is so flexible. I apologize if everybody knows it, but I want to mention it just in case.

"For the first session of a new class I prepare:

Find someone who

- has been here more than 3 months
- likes licorice
- can type more than 20 words per minute
- has more than two brothers or sisters
- speaks more than two languages
- likes computers

"Students walk around with this list, and need to ask many classmates before they can finish the list. The first student to have a name next to each item is the winner. I can make the list longer if there are more students. I can include specific items about students, like 'plays the piano' if I have that information before the class. It is always successful."

Do you have an ESL tip that works for you? Why not share it with our readers? Teachers and tutors are always looking for new ideas!

On the market

Reviews of useful ESL materials

"Can You Relate?" *by Michael Bendel (1996 Everglory Publishing Co., P.O. Box 1573, Boston, MA 02104, phone 1-800-270-1127) Game Book One and Two, US$20 each. Workbooks and tapes also available. ISBN Book One: 0-9650861-1-9*

Our readers are always looking for new games and activities to supplement their classroom work, so we thought we should bring this two-volume collection to your attention. The author, Michael Bendel, has included 80 games and activities, many of which are original, interesting and useful.

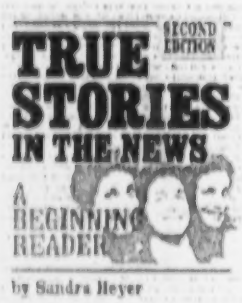
For example, we liked the sound of a game called 'Amnesia' in which students select cards with a "problem" (I have a bad cough, I lost all my money, etc.). They circulate and discuss their problems. Finally there is a contest to see who can remember what everyone's problem was.

'Auction Block' (in Book Two) sounds like a fun way to practice numbers. The students are millionaires and bid for items such as the British crown jewels, dinosaur bones, a rock from the moon, etc.

What we like about these materials the most are the language examples provided. 'Action Zack' is a verb guessing game that includes lots of actions you wouldn't have thought of (vote in an election, catch criminals, give someone a haircut, etc.) 'Favor Chase' includes a list of 50 problems the students need to ask advice about (locked out of the house, sister won't talk to me, afraid of tigers, don't know who I am, etc.). These lists would be useful for a number of activities.

Not all of the games are equally appropriate for adults, and some have a college kid-like silliness. As usual, you need to be selective in what you present to your students. The other caution we would add is that many of the activities are quite teacher-centered and contest-oriented. This can be fun sometimes, but can also be overdone.

In summary, creative teachers will find some useful ideas here.



"True Stories in the News*, a beginning reader," 2nd edition, by Sandra Heyer. (1996 Addison Wesley/Longman, 1-800-322-1377) 94pp, $11.50. Cassette also available. ISBN 0-201-84660-8*

So many teachers have told us their students like this reader that we thought we should bring it to everyone's attention. The stories are real-life human interest stories adapted from the news for beginning level ESL students (there are also three other books in the series, one each for low-beginning, high-beginning and intermediate readers).

What fun! The stories are funny, heartwarming and poignant, and sure to be of interest to students. The topics include people who ate dish soap by mistake, triplets separated at birth, people overcoming their handicaps, children rescued from danger, friends reunited.

There is a common thread in the selections of personal triumph which is pleasing and perhaps even inspiring.

Each of the 22 units includes a short reading, a photo (with pre-reading questions), and just enough exercises to help your students reinforce the new vocabulary. There is also a discussion and a writing activity in each unit that gives your students a chance to react personally to the story and tell some stories of their own.

This interesting book would be appropriate as a supplementary reader for your beginning-level adult students, whether you teach in a large class or in a one-on-one tutoring situation.

News & notes

Upcoming conferences

◆ June 13-16, 1996—**Laubach Literacy Action** biennial conference in Portland, Oregon. Contact LLA at 315-422-9121.

◆ June 21–23, 1996—**TESOL Academy** six workshops at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland. Contact TESOL at 703-836-0774.

◆ June 28, 1996—**Nebraska Coordinators for Adult Literacy** statewide ESL Workshop in Lincoln, Nebraska. Contact the ESL Program at UNL, 402-472-1884.

◆ August 1–3, 1996—**Ninth Annual Adult Literacy and Technology Conference (ALT)** in Chicago, Illinois. Call 217-524-3529.

Five whole years

Hands-on English marks the 5th anniversary of its publication. We can't believe so much time has past since we started! On the other hand, it feels like we've been doing it forever. As long as you keep sending us your great teaching ideas, though, we'll keep publishing!

New newsletter

The "Newcomer's Almanac," a newsletter for families new to the United States, is an interesting publication we've just found out about. It provides information about American holidays, customs, values, social issues and language. It also deals with issues of adjusting to a new life. The editor is Anne Copeland, who is a child and family clinical psychologist.

If you are interested in subscribing, contact: Newcomer's Almanac, P.O. Box 1153, Brookline, MA 02146. Tel: 617-566-2227 or Fax: 617-277-0889.

Funding may improve

The latest word we have on U.S. federal funding for literacy programs is that some of the funding that was cut off in Congress has been restored again. Library literacy programs, for example, were slated to be axed but apparently will survive after all.

Thanks goes to all the hardworking people around the country who have made their elected officials aware of the importance of adult education and literacy. Their efforts to be heard are paying off.

Online opportunities

Directory resource

An Internet Directory by Dr. Thomas Eland includes chapters on how to use all aspects of the Internet, listservs, gopher sites, and World Wide Web sites.

If you would like a paper copy of "The Internet Directory of Literacy and Adult Education Resources, 2nd edition," send $10 (payable to University of St. Thomas) to: Regional Adult Literacy Resource Center, University of St. Thomas #5019, Saint Paul, MN 55105.

NCLE online

The National Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE) now has a World Wide Web page that you can access for information about their adult literacy publications.

The NCLE page features a link to full text files of ERIC digests on ESL, an up-to-date list of NCLE publications, an easy way to e-mail requests to NCLE, links to other projects at the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL).

The address is:
http://www.cal.org/CAL/HTML/ncle.htm

ESL Virtual Catalog

This site has information on publishers, professional organizations, listservs, and links to downloadable resources. (And as long as you're there, visit the *Hands-on English* page!!) The virtual catalog address is:

http://www.pvp.com/esl.htm

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Publications:

All About Deafness, a resource guide by Salvatore J. Parlato, 1995, softcover, 76 pages, $9.95. To order, send your name and address with payment to: Dolores Parlato, 248 Seville Dr, Rochester, NY 14617.

Writing Inspirations, A FUNDEX of Individualized Writing Activities for English Language Practice by Arlene Marcus. 176 writing-topic activity cards for individual, pair or group work. Photocopyable masters. $20. ISBN 0-86647-092-1
Pro Lingua Associates. 800-366-4775.

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Idea file: Vocabulary sorting game

(See the article on page 1 of this issue for a full description of the activity.)

Vocab sorting game

Purpose:	Vocabulary review or pre-reading exercise; categorizing
Level:	Adaptable to any level; also multi-level
Time:	10 minutes to half an hour
Materials:	Blank paper, some categories

1. Have students form groups of 3 to 4.
2. Give each group a blank sheet of paper (mark for 2 columns).
3. Give the class two categories (i.e. *fruit / vegetable* or any two contrasting concepts) and ask them to write these headings on the top of their sheet.
4. Have students brainstorm in their group and write words and phrases for each category. (Give students a time limit to complete this.)
5. Count the number of correct responses and award points to each group.
6. With the whole class together, have students from each group read aloud the words from their lists. The rest of the students decide which category each word belongs in (do this orally or in writing, depending on how much time you wish to spend).

Follow-up: This activity might provide a good starting point for some student writing.

Keep this card handy in case you need an idea in a hurry!

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Volume 6, Number 2 July/August 1996

Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

Contents:

Letters 3

Minigrant report: An oral history project 4

Minigrants results, '96 6

Idea file: An Olympic interview or role-play .. 7

Crossword puzzle: Many ways to say "I'm not sure." 8

Speaking activity: "I'm really not sure." 9

Vocabulary: Fruit and vegetable categories—find the similarity 10

"Eat your fruits and vegetables!" 11

On the market: Reviews of five publications for ESL 12

News & notes 14

Online opportunities 14

Hints & tips 16

Editorial:
Who's your teacher?

We had the great pleasure of meeting a pianist/piano teacher this summer. We were interested to hear about her work. During the course of the conversation, we were surprised when she mentioned she was looking for a new teacher for herself.

A teacher? Wasn't she already an accomplished musician? Our friend responded by telling us that many musicians, even the great ones, continue working with a teacher throughout their careers.

Ongoing feedback

It helps, she said, to have someone else notice habits you may be developing, or things about your playing that you might not notice yourself. It also helps your ongoing development to have someone who can challenge you and give advice about how to reach your goals. And, she said, you might select your teacher based on what your goals are.

The idea that an artist (even a creative, great one) needs a teacher to continue growing is an intriguing one. Of course, it makes sense—musicality isn't something you can acquire and put in the bank. It is an organic thing that needs nurturing.

Organic ESL?

It occurred to us that ESL teachers could benefit from this idea. We could think of our teaching art, not as something to be worked out and then repeated every year, but as a lifelong process of development and adjustment. Some of us already see teaching in this way, but we are still trying to teach ourselves, in isolation—to move forward without a guide.

A personal relationship

Of course, many teachers supplement their own ideas by reading books, taking courses, looking at materials, going to conferences, and logging on to Internet discussions. This is great, but it's not the same as having someone you trust giving you feedback about your work. In our field, that kind of relationship, whether with a mentor or a collaborator, is rare.

Perhaps we need to take the art of teaching more seriously, and seek out a formal teacher-student relationship to help us develop our craft. We think this is a very interesting idea!

Coming next issue. . .

Game activities!

- Why they are good teaching tools.
- Where to find ideas for games.
- A game you can try!

Hands-on **English**

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About the publication

Hands-on English has been helping teachers and tutors with practical teaching ideas since 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who taught ESL to adults in many different settings, and is familiar with the fun and the challenges involved.

Our articles and ideas are contributed by experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have an article or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

About our Minigrants program

Hands-on English awards a few small grants (of up to $200 each) annually for practical classroom projects. Applications are due each April 30, and are available upon request.

OK, guys—notice the pleading look on this editor's face? It's because we need more good teaching ideas from you! Hope to hear from you soon!

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Letters

In our last issue, we asked the revolutionary teaching question: "Are you having fun?" Here is one response we thought you'd all like to see:

Are We Having Fun Yet?

No, . . .not during the first days of a new school year when teachers are overwhelmed by forms, paperwork, and testing, when students sit silent as tombstones, watching, waiting, disconnected strangers in a strange land.

Yes, when. . .

. . .We begin to get to know on another and to laugh together.

. . .I can remember all the names without a cheat sheet.

. . .Students start to take turns welcoming newcomers.

. . .Thanksgiving arrives and we talk/write about what we are thankful for, and the most frequent response is, 'My English class.'

. . .Even the reticent begin to razz one another. "Lili, you're on time today. What happened? What's going on?" (Spontaneous idiomatic usage!)

. . .The ever-silent Tanya takes on a role play with such comedic flair that we are all reduced to tears of laughter.

. . .The concept of journal writing finally catches hold, when Peter's journal unexpectedly moves from the mundane to the evocative, when, now and then, a journal entry is so moving that fellow students recall it even years later and I get a letter from a former student who writes, "Remember Sherry's journal? Where is she now? Let me know."

. . .We begin the countdown until the Winter holidays, and students are organizing (oh-so-secretly) gifts for the teachers, deciding who shall make the speeches, who shall bring what and finally gathering to share special dishes, to sing familiar carols first in English and then (group by group) in Korean, Spanish, Russian, Polish, Portuguese, French, Chinese, Czech. . .

. . .In January, the fall-term Beginners shyly move up to Intermediate and Lupe, who blushed, stuttered, and waved a negative hand every time he was asked to speak, finally volunteers to be a group discussion leader and to present his report to the entire class.

. . .And fellow students, smiling in encouragèment, giving him thumbs-up and a round of applause.

. . .Springtime encourages the shy-I-can't-do-this Mei to organize a class trip to her vegetable garden, and she blossoms into such an expert that she's unanimously proclaimed garden editor of our ESOL newsletter.

. . .The school year winds down. Exams are over; portfolios bulge, but. . .

. . .Students refuse to quit over summer break, organizing their own weekly get-togethers "just to keep practicing, just to keep talking English together."

. . .But mostly, when, nearly every day, they teach me something new.

—***Sue Sandeen***, *Alachua Cty Adult ESOL, Gainesville, Florida*

Minigrants award winner '95:
An oral history project

Clifford Lee, coordinator of the Asian Friendship School in Philadelphia, received this award to support an ambitious, long term project that involved adult Asian refugees and immigrants in telling and writing their own stories and publishing them in a newsletter.

Community commitment

The language-learning part of this project—interviewing, writing, learning vocabulary, editing and reading—was only part of the reason for doing this, however. The further purpose of the oral history project is help the students connect with each other, build a cohesive community among themselves and become active members of the larger community.

Reaching out?

Lee hopes that the student-written newsletter that results from this project will be a tool that helps to achieve these goals. Recently, in fact, some of the stories produced by the students were included by the Asian Arts Initiative (a Philadelphia-based organization) in a publication about cuts in welfare and family immigration levels and how they affect refugees and immigrants.

How they did it

First, Lee met with the students to find out if they wanted to work on an oral history project. He showed them an oral history video from a refugee center in Oregon to give them an idea of what to expect. The students voted to go ahead with the project.

Next, he designed a series of questions for the oral interviews. These questions were grouped in four categories: "Why I left," "The Journey," "Coming to America," and "What is your homeland now?" (See the opposite page for a list of the interview questions.) He planned to integrate the work on these interviews over a 10-week semester at the school.

The students conducted the interviews in pairs and then had follow-up lessons with their teachers. The same interview questions were used in three classes of different levels, although of course with slightly different teaching approaches. Lee prepared a list of suggested teaching materials for the teachers at each level, so that they could integrate the interview topics into their regular ESL instruction.

Five student volunteers got some instruction on how to do word processing in both English and Vietnamese, so that they could help put together the publication of oral histories. The newsletter will be sent to current and past students, to other local community organizations, and to other community organizations working with Asians. These writings are thus a good public relations tool but can also be used in future ESL classes for language learning as well

Some teaching tips

Lee reports that each category of questions fits in well with about two weeks of class work. He also suggests having students at different levels interview each other, as this would help the lower-level students to get their stories told more effectively, while still giving upper-level students a language challenge.

KENSINGTON Joint Action Council

The Asian Friendship School is a community-based ESL program, sponsored by the Kensington Joint Action Council, for the Asian residents (predominantly recent Vietnamese refugees/immigrants) in the Kensington neighborhood of Philadelphia. The school seeks both to increase the students' English language proficiency and to build their leadership skills, so that they may work positively to improve their neighborhood.

Some oral history questions. . . "

Here are the interview questions used in this project—we thought you would like to see them, as they might be useful with your students as well.

The following questions are organized into four categories. Each category will take approximately 2 weeks of class time. In addition to getting answers to these questions, studentsare also encouraged to collect photos, documents, etc. that supplement the stories.

Why I left

* Talk about your background in your "home" country. For example:
  - Where and when were you born?
  - Who is in your family?
  - What are your first memories?
  - What was your job?
  - What was your home and neighborhood life like?
* What was happening in your country and in your life before you left?
* What finally made you decide to leave your country?
* Any particular memories about the time you left that stand out in your mind?
* Do you think other Americans understand what happened at that time you left?
* Do you want to go back to your country?

The Journey

* How did you leave? What gave you the opportunity to leave your country? What happened when you left? What was it like? Did you take everything with you?
* Who in your family went with you?
* Who else left with you? Did you have a group besides your family?
* How did it feel when you finally said goodbye to your country and anyone you left behind?
* What was the refugee camp like? Where was it? How long did you stay there?
* What did you do at the refugee camp every day?
* Did you feel safe during your journey and during your time at the camp?
* What did you think America was going to be like?

Coming to America

* What did you think your opportunities were in America when you first came here?
* What was your first experience in America?
* How often do you watch TV? What does TV tell you about America?
* How is America different from your country?
* What did you think about Americans when you first came here? Give an example.
* What do you think about American men? American women?
* What do you think about Asian men in this country? Asian women?
* Did you have any bad experiences?
* How long have you been in the U.S. so far?
* Do you miss your country? What do you miss about your country?

What is your homeland now?

* What do you like about America?
* Do you know any interesting people? Who do you admire the most and why?
* What don't you like about America?
* What do you tell your friends or family when you call them in your "home" country? What do you talk about? How often do you make phone calls to your "home" country?
* What are your future plans? For example—What do you want to do 2 years from now?
* Do you want to go back to your country? Or do you want to continue living in America? Do you want to be a citizen?
* Do you feel like you belong here?
* Do you accept this new country as your home? What are you going to contribute to build your new home in this country?
* What do you think about your old country? Do you want to do something to help your country in the future? What?

Hands-on English Minigrants awards, 1996: And the winners are. . .

We are very proud to announce that our 1996 Minigrants have been awarded, and that this year six great projects were funded. We can't tell you what a thrill it is to tell six deserving educators that we can support their work!

In addition to the six winners, there were about 15 other proposals that were ranked highly enough by our committee that we would have liked to fund them. There are lots of people out there with good ideas! Here is a list of the 1996 awardees, in alphabetical order:

Rebecca Anderson, literacy tutor at the Commerce Library Literacy Program in Commerce, Texas. Rebecca has worked with ESL students for ten years. Currently she's working with a multi-level group of eight international students, the majority of whom are Chinese.

Her project, called "Mystery Party," will involve the students in a role-play activity over several sessions in which they attempt to solve a murder mystery together. The simulation should give the students an opportunity to gain confidence in speaking, learn about social customs, and have a lot of fun while doing it.

Lynda Flores Argetsinger, instructor at the Women's Refugee Alliance in Seattle, Washington. Lynda has taught ESL for eleven years. Her 20 intermediate level students are refugees and immigrants in the Seattle area.

Lynda and her students are planning a "Community News Board" for their center, which will help other immigrants to make better use of community resources and adjust to a new life. The students will research the information about local services themselves and present it to other students.

Jane Biesanz, ESL teacher at the Winona Community Education/Adult Literacy program in Winona, Minnesota. Jane has worked with ESL students for nine years. Her 20 adult students are a mixed-level group.

Jane's proposal, for "American History—Mini Units," comes in response to student requests for more content instruction, and more knowledge about what their children are learning in school. Jane will custom-design a series of short history units about famous Americans, with activities for each one.

Johnny Bennett, ESL teacher at Fort Scott Community College in Fort Scott, Kansas. Johnny has taught ESL students for 20 years. His current group is a dozen post-secondary students he meets with three hours a week.

For his project, "Teaching ESL Through Folk Songs," Johnny will develope several lessons which teach both language and culture through the medium of folksongs. He hopes the students will learn to sing the songs, study the vocabulary and history, and reach a better understanding of American cultural perspectives.

Elia Dreyfuss and Paul Hyry, instructors at the Community Education Project in Holyoke, Massachusetts. They have taught ESL for 5 years, and are working with a group of 36 Latino adults at mixed levels.

For this project, "Community Leaders on Cassette," their students will interview community leaders about issues important to them. They will make tapes of these interviews, which will serve them (and future students) both as an informational resource about the community, and as language instruction.

Joy Egbert, instructor at the Center for English Language Training (CELT), Indiana University, in Bloomington, Indiana. Joy has taught ESL for eleven years. She has a group of 16 advanced students who meet ten hours a week.

Joy's idea, "It's Elementary!" is to bring these international students into the local elementary school for a hands-on demonstration of some interesting aspect of their culture. She believes her older students will gain practice and confidence in public speaking, while the younger students will have a valuable opportunity to learn about other cultures.

We look forward to hearing about these projects, and as they are completed we will be sure to report to you in *Hands-on English* about the results!

What's a Minigrant??

In case you haven't heard of our Minigrants program, here are a few details:

*For the past five years, **Hands-on English** has awarded a number of small grants each year for innovative classroom projects. The awards are competitive, with a selection committee of ESL professionals ranking the applications.*

The awards are in amounts of up to $200, and although small, reflect our desire to help classroom teachers and tutors in a practical way.

The deadline for application is April 30, and new forms for 1997 will be mailed starting in January 97. If you are interested in applying, you are welcome to send us your name and address for next year's mailing list.

Idea file:
An Olympic interview

Here's a chance for your students to enjoy playing an important role while practicing their English!

Have each student decide whether to play the role of an athlete or a reporter (it's nice if it's half and half). Then, prepare for an interview by reading and thinking about the cards (right).

Next, each reporter meets with an athlete and conducts an interview. (If there's time, reporters could rotate and interview a different athlete.)

Finally, reporters could present their interview to the whole class, or write up the interview as a news report.

For your "idea file," note that this is a great activity that works with many current events themes—interview a politician, a survivor, a President of a country, etc.

Olympic athlete

You are an Olympic athlete! You are going to be interviewed by a reporter. Think about some of these things before the interview:

What is your sport?
How many years have you played this sport?
What country are you representing?
What kind of medal did you win in Atlanta? (Gold, silver, bronze)
Have you won any medals before?
Why do you love this sport?
Is it difficult or easy to play this sport?
What is the best thing about being in the Olympics?
What is the worst thing about being in the Olympics?
What do you plan to do in the future?
What would you like to tell other athletes, to encourage them?

News reporter

You are a news reporter! You are about to interview an Olympic athlete. Think about some of these things, first:

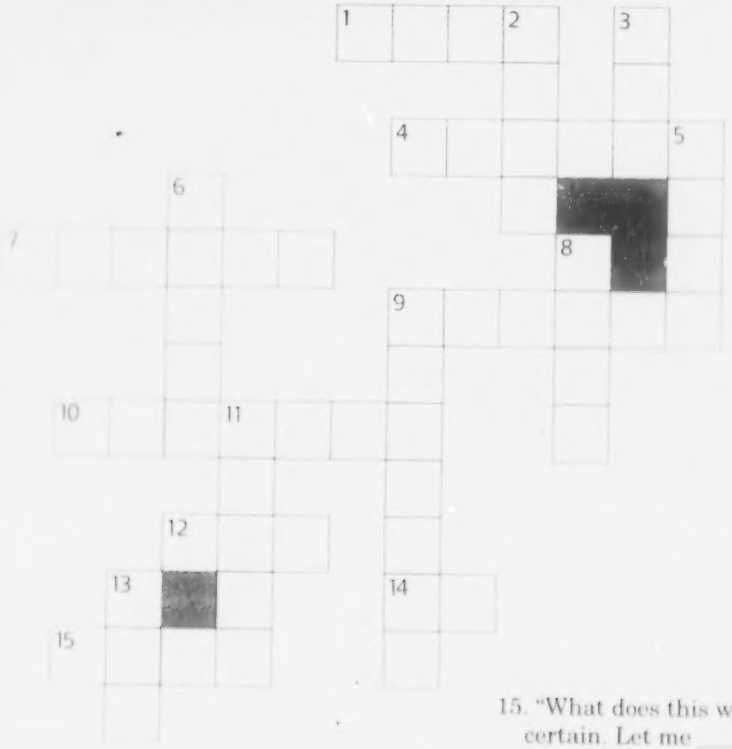
What kind of reporter are you? (TV, radio, newspaper)
What country are you representing?
Have you interviewed other Olympic athletes, or is this your first?

Now make a list of questions to ask the athlete, for example:

What country are you from?
What is your sport?
What medals did you win?
What is the most difficult thing about being an athlete?
Did you enjoy playing in the Olympics? Why or why not?
(etc.)

Crossword puzzle:

Many ways to say "I'm not sure"



Word list

afraid
air
certain
chance
don't
doubts
if
know
look
maybe
not
sure
think
true
whether
yet

Across clues

1. "Who won the game?" "I _____ know. The game isn't over yet! It's still up in the air."
4. "When you got married, did you have any _____?" "No, I didn't. I was sure it would be a good marriage."
7. "Don't worry—you'll learn English quickly." "I don't know. I'm _____ it's too difficult."
9. "Do you think it will rain tomorrow?" "Maybe. I think there's a fifty-fifty _____."
10. "Did you hear that ABC Company has some job openings?" "Yes, but that was last week. I'm not sure _____ they still do."
12. "Did you get the new job?" "I don't know. They didn't call me yet. It's still up in the _____."
14. "Do you know _____ we have school on Monday?" "I'm not sure. I think it's a holiday."
15. "What does this word mean?" "I'm not certain. Let me _____ in my dictionary."

Down clues

2. "My neighbor told me a strange story. Her cat can talk!" "Hmm. I wonder if it's _____."
3. "Are you doing anything special for your birthday next week?" "I don't know _____."
5. "Look at my paper. Is this the right answer?" "I'm not _____."
6. "Do you think the Congressman will visit our school?" "_____ he will, or _____ he won't."
8. "Who do you think will win the election? The Democrats or the Republicans?" "I really don't _____."
9. "Can you tell me where to register my car?" "I'm not _____. Why don't you ask somebody else?"
11. "Where is your brother?" "I'm not sure. I _____ he's at home."
13. "What was the reason for the crash?" "It's _____ certain. Nobody knows for sure."

Speaking practice:
"I'm not really sure."

Puzzle

In the puzzle on the opposite page, notice that some idioms are introduced in a gradual way. If students don't know the answers, they may find them by reading the other clues.

Follow up

As a follow-up to the puzzle, have students practice giving an "unsure" response to each of the questions on this page! They can use the idioms listed below for help, if needed.

The students can do this orally, or in writing, or both.

Ask and answer these questions. Practice different ways to say "I'm not sure." (Later, you can give your real answers too, if you want.)

1. Who is the best Olympic athlete?

2. What do you think will happen in Bosnia?

3. Who do you think will win the 1996 election in the U.S.?

4. Do you think the U.S. Congress is doing a good job?

5. What do you think about the economy in this country?

6. Do you think scientists will discover a cure for AIDS?

7. Do you think it's safe to fly in an airplane?

8. What do you think you will be doing, ten years from now?

Here are some idioms to practice:

I'm not sure. / I'm not really sure.
I don't know. / I don't know yet.
I'm not certain. / It's not certain.
There's a fifty-fifty chance.
It's still up in the air.
I have some doubts.
I wonder about that.
I'm not sure whether it's true. / I'm not sure if it's true.

Vocabulary exercise:
Fruit and vegetable categories

The summer season is an appropriate time to talk about fresh fruits and vegetables with your students. Of course, people are always interested in talking about food, so the topic brings some good language practice. You can usually find current newspaper reports about food or health issues. Also there are many cross-cultural lessons, as the students know about foods we don't have in this country, and vice-versa. And finally, exchanging information about what's available here and whereto find it helps your students to adjust to their life here.

Preparation

On the worksheet below, you might want to add one or two groups of food items to the list that your students are familiar with, or that are available locally in your area.

To find the similarities, students need to have a good idea of what each vegetable is like—if they are unfamiliar with the vocabulary they'll need a picture dictionary.

Teaching tips

First, have your students brainstorm a list of all the fruits and vegetables they can think of. Have someone write these on the board, grouping them in categories if possible (this is a 'word map').

Also ask your students to name or select the ones they know grow locally, or that are in season. (You can circle these on the map or add them.)

Next, pass out a copy of the worksheet and let the students work on it together, in pairs or small groups. They will find that there is more than one answer for many of the questions.

If the exercise is too easy for advanced students, have them work through it to get the idea, then design some more questions of their own. (Their questions could later be made into a follow-up activity for other students.)

When the students are ready, the group discussion of the answers can include not only the similarities but also the differences in each group.

Fruits & vegetables: Find the similarity

In each group, there is something similar about the items. Can you decide what it is? (Clue: The similarity might be their color, shape, taste, or where they grow.)

1. cucumbers, zucchini
2. tomatoes, apples
3. spinach, cabbage, lettuce
4. beets, potatoes, onions
5. cherries, raspberries, strawberries
6. pumpkins, carrots
7. watermelon, cantaloupe
8. lemons, limes, grapefruit
9. eggplant, plums
10. apples, oranges, pears

Some possible answers:

They are green in color. / They are orange in color. / They are purple in color.
They have green, edible leaves.
They have large, red fruit. / They have small, red fruit. / They have very large fruit.
They grow on trees. / They grow underground. / They grow on vines.
Their shape is round. / Their shape is long and thin.
They taste sour. / They taste sweet.

More vocabulary practice:

"Eat your fruits and vegetables!"

Here is another way to look at fruits and vegetables—according to how you eat them! This worksheet should give you and your students plenty of things to talk about!

Some discussion points:

- Foods available here students may not yet be familiar with.
- Foods available in their country that we may not be familiar with.
- The Surgeon General's advice about a healthy diet.
- The "food pyramid" and what it means.
- Recent news reports about food, diet and health.
- Where to buy fresh produce locally.

Here are some ways to prepare fruits and vegetables:

baked	cut up	frozen	raw	stir-fried
cooked	dried	juiced	salted	(others?)

1. To make a salad, you ____ ___ many different vegetables and mix them together.
   Name some vegetables you like to eat in a salad.

2. You can buy vegetables at the supermarket, but they are _____ if you buy them at a farmer's market.
   Find out if there is a farmer's market available in your area. What can you buy there?

3. Pickles are made with _____.
   Name some other foods that are made this way.

4. Peas usually grow in the early spring, but you can buy them all year round in the _____ foods section of the supermarket.
   Name some other vegetables you can buy this way.

5. Many vegetables can be cut up and _____ _____ very quickly with a little oil.
   Name some vegetables you can eat this way.

6. Potatoes and onions can be _____ together with water to make soup.
   Name some other vegetables you can have in soup.

7. Prunes and raisins are fruit that has been _____.
   Name some other fruit you can eat this way.

8. Jam and jelly is fruit that is first _____, then put in a jar.
   Name some other fruit you can buy this way.

9. You don't have to cook apples. They are delicious if you eat them _____.
   Name some other fruits and vegetables you can eat this way.

10. You can go to a farm to _____ raspberries yourself. They are cheaper than in the store.
    Name some other fruit that is available at local farms.

11. Apples and cherries are good when _____ in a pie for dessert.
    Name some other fruits you can have for dessert.

12. You can drink apple _____ or orange _____.
    Name some other fruit drinks.

On the market

Reviews of useful ESL materials

"More Than a Native Speaker: An Introduction for Volunteers Teaching Abroad" *by Don Snow (Published by TESOL, 1600 Cameron Street, Ste. 300, Alexandria, VA 22314, USA, Tel: 703-836-0774, Fax: 703-836-78864). ISBN 0-939-791-64-1*

The title of "More Than a Native Speaker" does not do the book justice. Don Snow has really organized a very good overview of teaching English to speakers of other languages, which would appeal not just to volunteers but also to many experienced teachers, regardless of whether or not they were planning to teach abroad.

Although the book covers teacher preparation with an eye to the inexperienced teacher facing the prospect of that first class, Snow presents a number of issues which are always good to review, and which apply to most ESOL classes, regardless of where they may be located. He offers sample lesson plans and suggests strategies for dealing with, as well as teaching about, cultural issues. Ample attention has been given to the different areas (listening, speaking, reading/understanding, writing, vocabulary, and grammar), with very cogent tips on teaching these subjects.

Nothing compares to actual, practical training and experience, but if one were unable to manage a certificate course (or, of course, graduate work), this book would certainly be the next best choice in very basic preparation for teaching ESOL, either domestically or abroad. Cultural adaptation concerns are discussed in addition to the practical teaching issues and there is also a very good list of suggested books covering a wide range of topics for the beginning teacher, as well as an extensive bibliography. To sum up, "More Than a Native Speaker" should be a must for every teacher planning to teach abroad, as well as every beginning teacher everywhere.

—by Meg Gam

"The Teacher's Complete & Easy Guide to the Internet" *by Linda Stilborne and Ann Heide (Trifolium Books, Inc., 238 Davenport Road, Ste. 28, Toronto, ON, Canada M5R 1J6, Tel: 416-960-6487, fax: 416-925-2360, email: trising@io.org. U.S. Distributor: Trifolium Books, Inc./General Distribution Services (GDS) Inc., 85 River Rock Road, Ste. 202, Buffalo, NY 14207, Tel: 1-800-805-1083, Fax: 1-416-445-5967) ISBN 1-895579-85-6*

Those who are beginners on the Internet, as well as those who've been "netting" for a while, will find a wealth of useful information in this handy book. Each aspect of the Internet, from how to set up your computer for Internet access, to descriptions of the different features, such as mailing lists, newsgroups, gophers, anonymous ftp and the World Wide Web, is described thoroughly, in easy to understand language with step-by-step instructions which explain how to access and use these options. Even a veteran is likely to learn something from the descriptions of Internet features .

The authors have included projects and lesson plans for each Internet area discussed. They include suggestions on how to use the Internet in classes with direct access, but these are adaptable for those of us who are interested in using the Internet but whose classes don't have access.

An amazing number of very interesting Internet and World Wide Web sites focusing on practical educational issues are listed, making "The Teacher's Complete & Easy Guide to the Internet" the closest thing to an educator's Internet yellow pages that I've seen yet. Most projects are easily adaptable to use in English classes and there is a specific listing of ESL sites in the back of the book. There are also many sites from which files can be downloaded for use in non-computerized classes.

I've seen other books on the Internet, but this is the one I'll keep near the computer. Each time I look back at it, I find some new idea to explore.

—by Meg Gam

In this issue, we bring you a collection of reviews which we hope will help you prepare for the fall. There's a teaching resource book, an Internet book, a periodical you probably haven't heard about, a classroom activity and a newspaper for students.

More reviews. . .

"Cathy's Cards; Instant Conversation in the Classroom" *by Cathy Seitchik Diaz (Published by ALTA Book Center, 1-800-258-2375, Fax 1-800-258-2329). Ask for the Adult Edition, ISBN 1-882483-36-7*

There is a lot of ESL stuff out there, and sometimes we don't notice good things until an enthusiastic teacher points them out to us. That's how we discovered "Cathy's Cards," a simple but useful conversation tool for teachers at all levels.

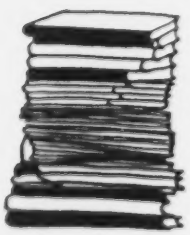
Each of the 270 cards included in the set has an opinion-type question. Students can each take a card and discuss the question with a partner. The questions range from "Who is your favorite musician?" to "What kind of shampoo do you use?" and "Do you like to drive?" to "What are three of the most important things in your life?"

For the most part, the questions are not difficult or mind-boggling but are human interest topics that allow classmates who hardly know each other to talk together easily. The cards create a structure for interaction. The teacher who told us about the cards said it was surprising how much talk they generated.

The cards come with a small Teacher's Guide that might give you some additional ideas for using the cards, but it isn't really necessary. Just hand out the cards and let the students talk. We wish these cards were laminated or printed on heavier stock, but otherwise they look like a great addition to your teaching toolbox. —by Anna Silliman

ELT NEWS & VIEWS, *an ESL/EFL publication from Argentina.*

If you could have only one ESL/EFL/ESOL publication, of course you'd choose *Hands-on English*, but what if you could have two?



ELT NEWS & VIEWS, an amazing magazine from Buenos Aires, Argentina, is filled with useful information and no fluff. For the past three years, its editor, Martin Eayrs, a British expatriate, has been putting together local (Argentinian) and international EFL news and issues, along with scholarly articles on practical issues and tips, lesson plans, games, quizzes, and reviews of new materials. Special "supplements" cover specific special interest topics in each issue, such as Business English, and one on dictionaries and reference books. This is not a glossy magazine, averaging about 85 pages of tiny type and no graphics, with supplements of around 20 pages.

Although initially ELT News & Views would appear to be area-specific, its wealth of international news coverage (and gossip), in addition to the extensive articles, ideas, teaching tips, quizzes and lesson plans in each issue render it a treasure trove hitherto unavailable to the average teacher. The only drawback I can find to this magazine is that it only comes out three times yearly.

Yearly subscriptions (three issues) are available to U.S. residents for $35. Argentinian subscriptions are available for $20. per year, and other Latin American subscriptions run $25. (Visa and MasterCard are accepted). Single sample issues may be had for $12.50.

Those interested in more information or in subscribing can contact ELT News &Views directly by fax at (54)-1-375-3944, by email at eltnews@wamani.apc.org or by mail at ELT News and Views, Uruguay 782-3 (1015) Capital Federal Buenos Aires, Argentina.

—by Meg Gam

"News for You," *(New Readers Press, P.O. Box 888, Syracuse, NY 13210, Tel: 1-800-448-8878) ISSN 0884-3910*

Doesn't everybody already know about this? It's a four-page weekly newspaper written for adults at a 4th to 6th-grade reading level. The paper has been publishing for more than 30 years, and is interesting, although (unlike most 'real' U.S. papers) not sensationalist.

It is useful for ESL students but probably too difficult for beginners. It is inexpensive enough (32¢/week) that students can afford to subscribe themselves, or you can order a class set with a teacher's guide at an even cheaper rate.

—by Anna Silliman

News & notes

Need for English

According to 1992 U.S. Census data, there are approximately fourteen million people in the United States who require English language services. California, Texas and New York State have the largest number of adults who would benefit from such instruction.

Of the fourteen million people in the United States who require ESOL assistance, fewer than 15%, or about one in eight, are currently being served.

(Thanks to the Literacy Assistance Center, New York, NY, for this information from their newsletter.)

Language exchange

There is a short but wonderful article in the Spring '96 issue of theTESOL Journal (Vol. 5, No. 3) on page 30, in the "Tips" section. Janet Pocorobba, an ESL teacher, asked her students to teach her one new word a week in their languages. The students got to quiz her every Friday. This was intended as a way to bring the students' languages into the classroom. Perhaps the teacher wanted to show she was reaching out to the students, by putting herself in a learning role.

What she didn't expect, though, was that the students started teaching each other, too! "One day I was greeted in Japanese by a student from Mexico while his Japanese tutor nodded approvingly and patted him on the back."

The teacher reported that this activity broke down the barriers between students from different countries.

(If you don't subscribe to this publication yourself, you may find it in a library well-stocked with educational publications.)

Online opportunities

Teaching ideas online

by Meg Gam, ESL teacher in New York, NY.

Many of us may be tempted to discount the Internet and its resources if our classrooms do not have computer facilities. There are, however, many ways to take advantage of what the Internet and the World Wide Web offer, even if the only acess you have is your own home computer. Many many resources on the Internet can be downloaded and adapted as handouts and lesson plans for your technologically-limited classroom.

For those with World Wide Web access, there are two very interesting sites to visit in the ESL/EFL/ESOL realm. Linguistic Funland has an ESLoop, which will lead you on circuit of some of the best and most popular ESL/EFL/ESOL Internet sites. It's at: http://math.unr.edu/linguistics/esloop

While you're at Linguistic Funland, you can check out the International ESL/EFL/ESOL Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) file, a document compiled by yours truly, which lists even more resources, both on and off the Internet. It's direct address is: http://math.unr.edu/linguistics/mele.faq.html

Another wonderful website if Dave's ESL Cafe. This site has useful information and contacts for teachers and students alike. The basic homepage is at: http://www.pacificnett.net/~sperling/eslcafe.html

For those with Telnet access, an interesting site is the Telnet Services Gateway from which you can access over a hundred other telnet sites.

An interesting gopher site with good subject breakdowns is RiceInfo, at Rice University: gopher riceinfo.rice.edu

As always, if you're paying for your Internet access by the hour, set a clock by your computer. Most of these sites will prove so useful and fascinating that you may lose track of how fast time is flying by.

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***—Meg Gam, ESL teacher and publisher of* ESOL FAQ**

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Hints & tips

Do you have an ESL tip that works for you? Why not share it with our readers? Teachers and tutors are always looking for new ideas!

A news board

This is an easier, low-budget form of a class newsletter that still provides interesting discussion topics for your students.

If you have space on the wall of the classroom, hang a large sheet of heavy paper where students can see it. Divide the paper into "columns" and ask students to bring in clippings, pictures, messages, their written work, or any items they'd like the other students to see.

As students bring things in, have them arrange the items on the news board, removing any old ones that are outdated. If someone brings an item they need returned (such as a family photo), make sure the student takes it back at the end of the session, so it doesn't get lost. A better alternative might be to post a photocopy, not the original.

If you share a classroom and can't leave items hanging, plan to roll up the news board and store it for next time. Another possibility is to use a large easel, if one is available.

The students should get to decide themselves what kinds should of items are of interest to the group. If there is a large number of students, they may want to start additional pages with special topics (a sports page??). Students could take turns being the 'editor' of the page if managing the items becomes a problem.

Why it works

Shy students who have something to share can do so without putting themselves in the spotlight. The news board will provide some extra conversation topics, especially before and after class.

Hands-on
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July/August issue

Volume 6, Number 3 September/October 1996

Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

Contents:

Letters 3

Tools & techniques:
Multi-level dictation about elections 4

Two games—'Human spelling bee' and 'Categories' 8

Crossword puzzle:
Elections '96 6

Idea file:
Create a public service announcement 7

Resources:
A bibliography of games 10

Grammar grab-bag:
"Do you think he'll win the election?" Practice forming questions 12

News & notes 14

Hints & tips 16

Editorial:
A personal geography

A flurry of interest

The arrival earlier this fall of Hurricane Fran reminded us again how becoming an editor has changed our concept of geography. For example, each time the names of endangered towns in the southeast part of the U.S. are mentioned in the news, we find ourselves wondering if any of our subscribers live in the path of the storm. (Sometimes we even browse through the computer file to see who lives there!)

As the storm nears, we wonder how they and their students might be affected. Will they have school tomorrow? Have they evacuated? Are they OK? Will their school still be standing? Will their copies of *Hands-on English* be safe??

The same thing happens when we hear of an earthquake in Japan, drought in the Southwest, snowstorms in the Northeast, or even when we see the unusual name of a town on a roadsign while travelling. Because we've talked with many of you on the phone, or received your letters and notes, or just entered your subscription order, we feel a friendly connection to many place names that were formerly meaningless.

A global connection

Most ESL instructors have experienced this effect also. Once you've had an interesting relationship with a student from Poland, say, or Korea, doesn't the word "Polish" or "Korean" mean something more to you, even though you haven't actually been there? And the longer you've been teaching ESL, the more you learn about other countries and the people there.

These personal connections—collections of anecdotes, experiences, flavors, sounds and memories picked up from our students— help us to build a mental image of the world that is much more interesting, subtle and complex than an image gained from news stories.

Who's the teacher?

We wish that more Americans could have the wonderful, broadening experiences that we get every day in ESL classes. In a way, just as we are ambassadors of our culture to our students, they are ambassadors of their culture to us.

Here's something you can tell your students about why we need immigrants in this country (yes, we do need them!). We need them to teach us about the rest of the world.

132

Hands-on **English**

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September/October 1996

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About the publication

Hands-on English has been helping teachers and tutors with practical teaching ideas since 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who taught ESL to adults in many different settings, and is familiar with the fun and the challenges involved.

Our articles and ideas are contributed by experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have an article or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

Who reads H.O.E.?

We thought you might be interested to know what a wide range our readership covers. We have subscribers working with ESL students in:

Refugee programs
Literacy programs
Community colleges
Colleges and universities
Correctional facilities
Resource centers
Adult Education programs
Volunteer tutoring
Intensive ESL programs
Teacher training programs
Religious organizations
Community Education programs
Secondary schools
Workplace education
Language institutes
Libraries . . . and more!

What do our readers have in common? They are dedicated, they are working under sometimes difficult conditions, and they are looking for practical, adult materials that will help their students learn English.

About our Minigrants program

Hands-on English awards a few small grants (of up to $200 each) annually for practical classroom projects. Applications are due each April 30, and are available upon request.

Your editor, Anna Silliman, wishes she could visit all of these programs to find out what's really going on out there! Since that's not practical (at least not until we get our own Lear jet), your correspondence is appreciated. Keep in touch!

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33

Letters

Need hotel ideas

"I'm a long time reader and love *Hands-on*. I am on a new venture, teaching English to the housekeeping department at Pebble Beach Resort in Carmel, Calif. I am hoping some of your readers can help.

"Is there any curriculum out there for this? We are attempting to develop our own, but I was hoping your readers could give me help with some ideas as to books, hand-outs, etc. There isn't much out there for the limited English speaking adult working in the hotel industry. Thank you." Sincerely,

Susanne Newbold
Aptos, California

Teaching beginners?

"We love your publication! All our teachers are volunteers—some with ESL training, all with at least a B.A. *Hands-on English* has helped us a lot. We teach mostly Hispanic immigrants with a limited education (6th grade average). We would welcome your ideas for teaching beginners in this category. Many thanks!"

Pilar Laugel, Our Lady Queen of the Americas Church
Washington, D.C.

We've had other requests for activities suitable for beginning students. Perhaps our readers can help with some useful suggestions?

Art, nature, nurture

"As an artist/art teacher I certainly understand the July/August editorial, "Who's your teacher?" Any form of teaching needs nurturing.

"In the same vein, friendship is an organic thing as well. To make a new student welcome is part of the nurturing process to stimulate friendship and encouraging bonding. Bonding is part of the student-teacher relationship as well as the student-student togetherness."

Dianne Scott
Nashville, Tennessee

Useful publication

"I had planned on not renewing this year, but the last few issues had lots of material I could use. I think the crosswords and accompanying exercises are especially valuable."

Carole Stokes
Kent, Ohio

We're certainly pleased you decided to renew! Keep letting us know what your needs are, and we'll try to bring you the most useful publication we can!

Just in time

"I really appreciate new ideas for the class, especially the ones with materials. If possible, include *timely* articles."

Akemi Kosuge
Chiba, Japan

Many readers have told us they like using current events topics with their students. I certainly hope you like this issue, because it includes many exercises related to news events!

Send us your card

How do you present yourself to the public? *Hands-on English* has noticed some interesting business cards and address labels from teachers and tutors recently.

One of our correspondents, for example, has an address stamp that includes 'Teacher of English as a Second Language' under his name. What a good idea!

We'd like to encourage our readers to do something like that for themselves, as one step toward greater dignity for the profession (and self-esteem, of course!). If you already have a card, return label or letterhead that mentions your ESL or literacy work, would you share it with *Hands-on English*? We'll publish a few to help inspire other readers. Thank you!

Tools & techniques:

Multi-level dictation—"Elections '96"

Here is a listening and writing activity about current events that we hope your students will enjoy. We provide three levels of difficulty. Of course, a fourth level would be a blank sheet of paper—the most challenging of all!

Preparation

Make plenty of copies of the worksheets on the following page. It might help to enlarge them first on your copier, making it easier for the students to write on them.

How to do it

We think the best way to give a dictation is to have the students listen to the passage before they even *think* about writing, so read it to them at least once before handing out the worksheets.

How to decide which students get which level? One way is to offer any of the three levels and let the students decide. If they find that level C is too difficult, for example, they can switch to level B. Perhaps the most beneficial approach for the students would be to start with an easy level and when they've succeeded at that, try it again at a harder level. It won't hurt to do the same exercise several times!

Once the students have their worksheets in front of them, have them listen only while you read the passage aloud a second time. This helps them to concentrate on the meaning of the passage before they start writing.

As you read the passage again for dictation, it's best if you can keep to a natural speaking speed, but leave long pauses between sentences or phrases for the students to write. Repeat as often as the students wish, but keep the flow of the words as natural as possible.

Correcting

When the students are ready to check their work, the nifty feature of this exercise is that different levels of students can help each other check their work, because each has different information on their worksheets.

Follow up

Once the students are very familiar with this passage, it might be interesting to see if they can reconstruct the whole thing from scratch. You could provide a sheet with 147 blanks (one for each word in the 11 sentences of the passage) and have them work in pairs or small groups to fill it in.

The computer version of this reconstruction activity is called "Storyboard," and it is a fun and challenging way to review a reading passage. (*Storyboard* is available from Athelstan Publications, 1-800-598-3880 for $99.)

The text for dictation (11 sentences, 147 words):

ELECTIONS 1996—On Tuesday, November 5, 1996, Americans will have a chance to vote. They can vote any time during the day, from early morning to late at night. In this year's election, they will vote to elect the next President of the United States. There are three candidates for president. Bill Clinton is the candidate for the Democratic Party. Bob Dole is the candidate for the Republican Party. And Ross Perot is the candidate for a new third party called the Reform Party.

When people go to the polls to vote on election day, they will see many names and many questions on the ballot. They will vote for one candidate for president, and they will also vote to elect a member of Congress. In many states they will vote to elect a Senator as well. Also, each city and state has many important elections on that day.

A

ELECTIONS 1996—On _____, November 5, 1996, Americans will have a chance to _____. They can vote any time during the day, from early morning to late at _____. In this year's election, they will vote to elect the next President of the _____ _____. There are three candidates for president. Bill _____ is the candidate for the Democratic Party. Bob _____ is the candidate for the Republican Party. And Ross Perot is the candidate for a new third party called the Reform _____.

When people go to the polls to vote on election _____, they will see many names and many _____ on the ballot. They will vote for one candidate for _____, and they will also vote to elect a member of Congress. In many states they will _____to elect a Senator as well. Also, each city and state has many important _____ on that day.

B

ELECTIONS 1996—On Tuesday, _____ 5, 1996, Americans will have a chance _____ _____, _____. They can vote any time _____ _____ _____, from early morning to late at night. In this year's election, they will vote to elect _____ _____ _____ of the United States. _____ _____ three candidates for president. Bill Clinton is the candidate for the _____ Party. Bob Dole is the candidate for the _____ Party. And Ross Perot is the candidate for a new _____ _____ called the Reform Party.

When people _____ _____ _____ polls to vote on election day, they will see many names and many questions _____ _____ ballot. They will vote for one candidate _____ president, and _____ _____ _____ _____ to elect a member of Congress. _____ _____ _____ they will vote to elect a Senator as well. Also, each city and state has many important elections _____ _____ _____.

C

ELECTIONS 1996—On Tuesday, November 5, 1996, Americans _____ _____ _____ _____ to vote. They can vote _____ _____ _____ _____ _____, from early morning to late at night. _____ _____ _____ _____, they will vote to elect the next President _____ _____ _____ _____. There are _____ _____ for president. Bill Clinton _____ _____ _____ for the Democratic Party. Bob Dole _____ _____ _____ for the Republican Party. And Ross Perot is the candidate _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ called the Reform Party.

When people _____ _____ _____ _____ to vote on _____ day, they will see _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ on the ballot. They will vote _____ _____ _____ for president, and they will also vote to elect a _____ _____ _____. In many states they will _____ _____ _____ a Senator as well. Also, each city and state has _____ _____ _____ on that day.

Crossword puzzle:
Election '96

Word list:

Arkansas
ballot
candidate
debate
Democrat
election
four
government
Kansas
November
president
Republican
speech
Tuesday
vice president
vote

Across clues

3. Americans elect a president every _____ years.
4. The President, Senators, and members of Congress are all part of the U.S. _____
6. Bill Clinton is not a Republican; he is a _____
7. Bob Dole's political party
10. The U.S. _____ is on November 5, 1996.
12. Clinton, Dole and Perot all want this job.
13. The candidates appear on TV together and argue with each other. This is a _____
15. Bill Clinton's home state
16. On election day, many Americans will _____

Down clues

1. U.S. elections are always on this day.
2. A person who is running for president is a _____
5. Kemp, Gore, and Choate all want this job.
8. When one candidate talks to the people he is giving a _____
9. U.S. elections are always in this month.
11. Bob Dole's home state.
14. A piece of paper for voting, with all of the candidates' names on it.

Idea file:

A public service announcement

Here's an activity for your "idea file," for those times when you really need something different to do with your students. This exercise gives students a chance to discuss current themes that come up in the media.

Here's a chance for you to look at media ads with your students—print ads in newspapers and magazines, or TV ads if you have the technology available to look at some clips in the classroom. In either case, students will get to analyze and categorize what they see. Then, they will put their own skills to work to create a public service announcement on an issue of importance to them.

Three kinds of ads

Discuss advertising with your students. They can surely describe some ads they have seen on TV. Explain that there are three categories of advertising:

1. Commercial ads—They want you to buy a specific product. (i.e., MacDonald's fast food, Ford cars)
2. Political ads—They want you to vote for someone. (Students will see a lot of these this fall!)
3. Public service ads—They want you to understand something which will improve your life or society. (i.e., don't smoke, don't use drugs.)

Using some examples (clipped from print media) have students decide which of the three categories each ad falls into. Discuss what each one is "selling" and why.

For an at-home assignment, ask students to note the ads they see on TV and select a category for each one. They can report on this at a future session.

psa's

Bring some examples (or have students bring examples) of some public service announcements. Discuss what each one wants you to do (or not do) and why.

Next, make a list of issues that are important to the students, which they would like to tell the public about. Have the students meet in small groups, choose an issue and write a public service ad for a newspaper. If you like, you can issue an (imaginary) million dollar budget to each group so they can plan an advertising campaign.

Create a p.s.a.

Purpose:	Awareness and understanding of ads; practice with all language skills
Level:	Intermediate, or higher
Time:	At least one session; can extend over two or more sessions
Materials:	Some magazines and newspapers with ads; examples of p.s.a.'s

1. Discuss three kinds of ads (commercial, political, public service) with students.
2. Have students collect examples of each kind of ad from print media.
3. *(optional)* At home, have students note TV ads and what categories they fit into.
4. Show students some examples of public service ads. Discuss their meaning and purpose.
5. Have students generate a list of important issues.
6. Have students choose one of these issues, and write/design a public service advertisement about this issue. Students may work in small groups.
7. Have students present their public service ads to the rest of the group.

Tools & techniques:
ESL games

Recently we asked our readers "are you having fun?". We were wondering what kinds of activities make language teaching and learning most enjoyable. One response came from Meg Gam in New York City, who says—games!

Crazy?

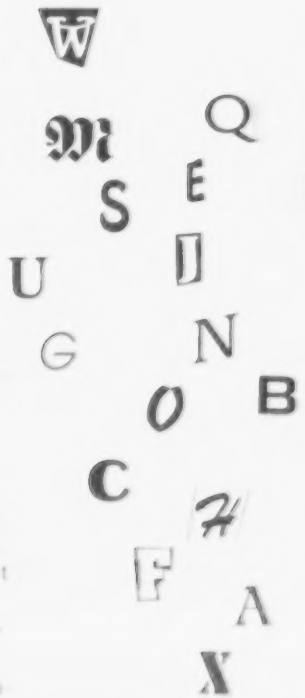
Meg told us how she got started using games for ESL. "When I first started in this business I couldn't do games at all. There was a crazy man in the room next to mine who was playing games every day with his class. I was very envious, but I didn't know how to do it. My students were envious of his classes too. So I went to the library and started to research parlor games and other types of games which can be played in a small space in a short time with a reasonable amount of fun, which could be adapted to grammar reinforcement and so on.

"Now, I figure that there are a lot of people out there who would like to do fun stuff but don't know where to start...so they are just not having as much fun as they could be having."

In our effort to help make ESL teaching easier (and more fun!) we bring you the following two games contributed by Meg Gam. And, for future issues we hope to hear from more of our readers who have game activities to share. (Send us your fun stuff! Thanks!)

These two ESL games were sent in as by Meg Gam. (Gam games??) We hope they will get your students giggling and learning at the same time!

Human spelling bee



Purpose of the game: Train students to listen to what is going on around them.
Level: Beginner to advanced
Age: Any age can enjoy this game
Materials required: None!
Preparation: A list of spelling words
Restrictions: Each team can have a maximum of 26 members and a minimum of 5.

Why it works: Students really do have to pay attention to each other, and cooperate, in order to do this exercise! The level of attention gets very high with this game.

Setup: Split the class into two equal teams. Instruct the teams to parcel out the letters of the alphabet equally among all the members. No team-member should have more than 1 vowel (count "Y" as a vowel). On teams of fewer than 26 students, each student will have more than one letter.

NOTE: It is a good idea to suggest to the students that letters not be assigned in consecutive order, to avoid having someone with V W X Y Z, which might not come up often.

How to play: Line up the two teams facing each other. Flip a coin to choose the beginning team. Call out a word the students should know. The team which is "up" must spell it by having each student announce her word in the correct order. (For example: if the word is "L-O-N-E-L-Y", the student who has "L" must say "L", the one with "O" must say "O", the one with "N" must say "N" at the proper time, and so on.)

The complicated part is getting the students to pay attention to one another ("L" and "O" may announce their letters, while "N" is off on a cloud somewhere not acknowledging that she has "N"). Make the game more lively by not allowing the team member to call out any letter unless they actually have it themselves. Enterprising team members may figure out who has the letter and nudge that person, if you allow it, but not say the letter.

If a team fails to spell the word correctly, the opposing team may be given a go at it, or you may choose to give out a completely new word. If a team successfully spells a word, they win a point. It tends to work better if the words to be spelled are alternated between the teams.

Categories

Purpose: Vocabulary review

Level: Beginner to Advanced

Age: Any age can enjoy this

Materials: Blank paper and pencils or pens

Preparation: A list of categories

Why it works: Students contribute words at their own level, so this is suitable for a multi-level group. At the same time, the page-switching allows students to see words others have contributed.

How to play: Divide the class into groups of three to five students each. Have the groups seat themselves in circles. Call out a category such as "things in the kitchen", "things which are blue", "things in the classroom", etc. Have each group write the name of the category on the sheet of paper and then, working together, make a list of words which fit into that category. (Make sure the students in charge of writing *print* so that others can read it.)

Limit the working time to 2 minutes. At the end of 2 minutes, have the groups switch papers. Then call out another category, and have the groups make another list. Continue in this manner until there are as many categories/lists as there are groups. Have the groups switch papers with each new category, in such a way that each switch brings them a paper which they have not had before. Once the lists have been made up, you can proceed in one of two ways:

1 -Compile lists: On the board compare the lists by having each group call out what they have on the lists they are holding. Group One will call out all their words, Group Two will call out any they have which are not on the board, and so on. Rotate so that each group has the chance to be first.

2 - Guessing game: Have the groups play a "password"-type game. First they select one of the categories. Then one student holds the list, selects a word and describes/defines that word until the groupmates guess it. Once the word has been guessed, the list may be passed along to another student in the group, until each student in the group has had a chance to define words.

Some category ideas:

Things in the kitchen
Things which are blue
Things in the classroom
Things you can eat
Things on TV
Things that are loud
Things that are expensive
Things that are cheap
Places you can walk to from here
Places you can drive to

Resources:
A bibliography of games

Contributed by Lesley Clear, Corona Del Mar, California. We were so delighted to speak with Lesley about games! She has taught a seminar in how to use games in ESL, and has generously provided us with this extensive list of resources.

Why games?

Games provide a motivation for students to acquire language because they create an immediate need for the language in a fun and exciting way. Often times teachers want to incorporate games into their curriculum, but don't know where to find game ideas. Listed below are some resources that can make a teacher's life easier, by helping to shift through the volumes of materials that are available out there to find the real "gems".

Books for Games and Activities in the ESL/EFL Classroom

Thinking Games 2 by Anderson and Bereiter - This book is filled with language activities designed to develop critical thinking, as well as vocabulary skills. This is one of a series of Thinking Games books (this one is for 9 yrs.+), other books in the series (except level 1) aim at a higher age level but can be easily adapted to teaching ESL to more advanced students. Fearon Teacher Aids/Simon & Shuster (800) 877-4283.

ESL Teacher's Activities Kit by Elizabeth Claire. This is a very nice resource for games and activities to be used with beginners. It is particularly appropriate and useful for teaching children. Many of the ideas can be modified for use with higher level students, but I would not recommend purchasing this book unless you are going to be working primarily with beginners or children. Prentice Hall (800) 947-7700.

Index Card Games and Activities for English by Raymond C. Clark. This is a very nice, inexpensive book providing ideas and instructions for making games from index cards. It is a book worth investing in, although its follow-up book ***More Index Card Games*** is a bit disappointing by comparison. Pro Lingua Associates: (800) 366-4775.

Keep Talking by Friederike Klippel. This is an excellent book, providing a variety of activities particularly designed to encourage the development of speaking and listening skills. It also has a focus on values clarification and critical thinking tasks. Cambridge University Press. Available through ALTA Book Center (800) 258-2375.

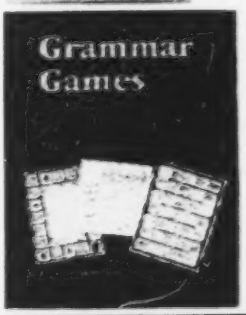
101 Word Games by George P. McCallum. This is a super resource, breaking down games by category: vocabulary, number, structure, spelling, conversation, writing, role plays/dramatics. It also provides very useful appendices identifying games in the book by language level, specific appropriateness for children, and games for homework. Oxford University Press: (800) 451-7556.

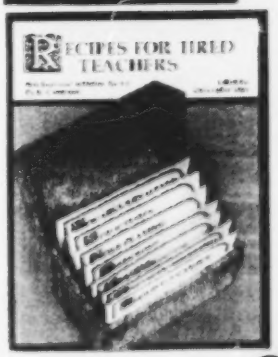
Mad Libs by Roger Price and Leonard Stem. There are many books in this series. A collection of short, themed stories with words strategically removed which must be provided by the class. Ask the students to suggest a noun, verb, adverb, etc. and the results are usually very funny. You can find these books at your local grocery/drug store, or children's bookstore.

Grammar Games by Mario Rinvolucri. As the title suggests, the activities in this book are specifically designed to reinforce grammar/structure. However, the activities build on many other skill areas at the same time, listening/speaking, reading/writing and vocabulary development. It is a British publication, so you may have to modify some of the games and materials to suit American English. Cambridge University Press (800) 872-7423.

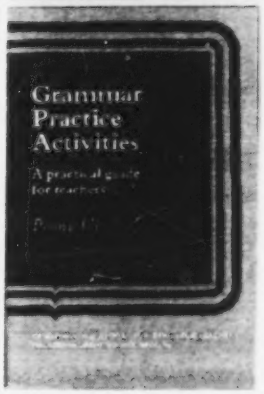
Recipes for Tired Teachers and ***More Recipes for Tired Teachers*** edited by Christopher Sion. These books are really excellent for reading/writing and role playing activities as well as vocabulary and listening/speaking tasks. Although activities are presented for all ability levels, the vast majority are directed toward intermediate+ level students. Many of these activities can be adapted to work with a higher or lower level, but they are particularly well suited to the intermediate levels. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company (800)322-1377.

The Card Book - Interactive Games and Activities for Language Learners by Abigail Tom and Heather McKay. The materials in this book are particularly well suited to beginners and low-intermediate level students. A series of pictures, which can easily (and legally) be photocopied, are provided with 4 or 5 variations on activities for their use in each category - clothing, food, furniture, animals, road signs, tools, faces, daily activities. Regents/Prentice Hall: (800) 947-7700.





Games bibliography, cont'd



Five-Minute Activities by Penny Ur and Andrew Wright. This is an excellent addition to an ESL teacher's library. Although the activities are presented in the book in alphabetical order, rather than according to a particular skill area or ability level (making it somewhat inconvenient), each activity does identify the skill area, specific procedure and variations for use. Cambridge University Press (800) 872-7423.

Grammar Practice Activities: A Practical Guide for Teachers by Penny Ur. This book is divided into 2 parts, the "Guidelines" section provides excellent information about the process of teaching of grammar and the second "Activities" section presents activities to teach about 34 specific points of grammar. Many of these activities are repetitions of those seen in other books, but the organization of this book makes it very easy to use and provides instant support for teaching each particular point of grammar. Cambridge University Press, (800) 872-7423.

Games for Language Learning by Andrew Wright, et al. Although author Andrew Wright has contributed to some other really terrific game books, this is not one of his better ones. It is worth looking through and does offer some new material, though many of the games are available in other, more useful texts. This book is somewhat unique however in that it has a large section devoted to psychology games and magic tricks for stimulating conversation. It also has useful summaries of all games at the back of the text. Cambridge University Press, (800) 872-7423.

Conversation Inspirations for ESL by Nancy Ellen Zelman. This book is an absolute "must have" in every ESL teacher's library. It is small and inexpensive and will provide you with more than 2000 topics and ideas to develop fluency skills. It is especially useful as a resource for role play activities. Pro Lingua Associates (800) 366-4775.

Books for Creating and Developing ESL/EFL Games

The ESL Miscellany by Raymond C. Clark, et. al. This is an excellent book to turn to for information when making games. It is subtitled "A treasury of cultural and linguistic information" and does include material on American culture which is very useful - particularly if you are teaching internationally. Pro Lingua Associates (800) 366-4775.

The ESL Teacher's Book of Lists by Jacqueline E. Kress, Ed.D.- This is a really fantastic ESL resource. It comes in very handy when preparing games - providing extensive lists of idioms, parts of grammar, antonyms /synonyms / homonyms, pronunciation practice, stress/intonation patterns, etc. It is -similar to The ESL Miscellany, but it is the more comprehensive of the two. Though it is useful for all ESL teachers, it is a "must have" for anyone who is planning on teaching internationally. The Center for Applied Research in Education, Available through Prentice Hall (800) 947-7700.

Values Clarification Handbook by S. Simon. There is actually a series of Values Clarification Handbooks which were developed from the 1970's through the 1980's. They provide a number of excellent exercises for interpersonal communication and simulation activities to promote critical thinking and self-reflection as well as developing language skills. Hart Publishers - Unfortunately these books are out of print, however you can still find copies in university libraries.

Other resources:

Library sales - Check with your local public library to see if they donate or sell used books and magazines. This is an excellent resource for magazines (such as National Geographics) for cutting out words, phrases and pictures.

Teacher supply stores - These rarely have ESL materials, but some mainstream K - 12 materials can be adapted. Ask if they do laminating, which is often cheaper than at a copier service.

Toy stores - They often sell dice, spinners and other supplies that you can use or that can inspire ideas for new games.

Grammar grab-bag:

"Do you think he'll win the election?"

Practice forming questions

The problem with many grammar activities is that they are usually kind of "dumb"—that is, they don't have any real meaning. They are often just an exercise in a vacuum. Students might be able to perform the exercise, but still not use that structure in real communication.

This exercise tries to blend a straightforward structure activity—forming a question—with some content. The students have a chance to give their opinions on current events as part of the exercise. This makes it not just mechanical, but also adult and interesting.

Multi-level grammar

The students who would most benefit from this activity are high beginners or low intermediate students. However, we have found that advanced students often need review practice in question-forming, so they can benefit, too. And because the opinion part of the exercise is open-ended, students at any level can participate. (Note: For students who want an extra challenge, try doing this exercise orally!)

The current events topics we have selected may not be relevant to your students, or they may be outdated by the time you use the exercise. It is easy to adapt the worksheet, however, by substituting your own "maybe" statements based on two or three news items the students are familiar with.

How to do it

Hand out a copy of the worksheet to each student, and do the first question with the group. You might demonstrate on the chalkboard that there are a couple of different ways to correctly phrase each question. For the opinion question, make it clear to the students that they can write what they think, and that they should explain their opinion if possible.

Give students some time to complete the worksheet, offering help with any vocabulary as they work.

When everyone is finished, it would be a good idea to make sure everyone's question is correct. You can do this in any of several ways: look over their shoulders and check while they are working, have students read their questions aloud, or have students write their questions on the board (or overhead projector) so everyone can check their answers.

Discussion

Once the grammar is checked and corrected, you are ready to discuss the issues. How you do this may depend on the size of the group and the interests of your students. For example, with a small-sized group of students, it might be fun to discuss all of the questions, one at a time, giving the students a chance to voice their opinions about each question.

If your class is too large for everyone to participate in this way, perhaps the students would like to meet in small groups to discuss just one of the questions. Students could form their groups around the issue they wish to discuss. It is always best to assign a specific task to such a group. In this case the task could be to survey each student and record all the opinions, then to list reasons. The results can be reported back to the entire group.

Tutors, too

If you are working with just one student, or a small group, this activity can also work very well, especially if the topics are of great interest to the student. You may want to choose the topics carefully.

If a student is cautious about giving an opinion, it might be that they feel it would be rude to disagree with you about something. (This is understandable in a tutoring environment.) In that case, choose topics the student knows about but that you are ignorant of (for example, about their home country). That way, the student's answer will be of great interest but not create conflict.

Below is an example you can show your students to help them get started with the exercise.

1. (Maybe Perot will win the presidential election in the U.S.)
Question: Will Russ Perot win the election?
Your opinion No, I don't think he will win. Only a small percentage of Americans want to vote for him.

Questions about the news

1. (Maybe Ross Perot will win the U.S. presidential election.)
   Question: _____
   Your opinion: _____
   _____

2. (Maybe Bill Clinton has been a good president.)
   Question: _____
   Your opinion: _____
   _____

3. (Maybe Bob Dole will be the next president.)
   Question: _____
   Your opinion: _____
   _____

4. (Maybe a woman will become president in the year 2000.)
   Question: _____
   Your opinion: _____
   _____

5. (Maybe a terrorist blew up TWA Flight 800.)
   Question: _____
   Your opinion: _____
   _____

6. (Maybe the disaster was caused by a mechanical problem.)
   Question: _____
   Your opinion: _____
   _____

7. (Maybe it's not safe to fly in an airplane.)
   Question: _____
   Your opinion: _____
   _____

8. (Maybe there is democracy in Bosnia now.)
   Question: _____
   Your opinion: _____
   _____

News & notes

Upcoming conferences

- October 18–19, 1996—**Ohio TESOL** in Columbus, Ohio. Call: Jian Sun, 614-245-7437.
- October 18-19, 1996—**Oklahoma TESOL** in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Call: Dilin Liu, OKC University, 405-521-5476.
- October 18–19, 1996—**Minnesota TESOL** at Hamline University in St. Paul, Minnesota. Call Joyce Biagini, 612-296-0326.
- October 19, 1996—**Massachusetts TESOL** at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts. Call: John Antonellis, 617-629-7073.
- October 19, 1996—**TexTESOL V** in Richardson, Texas. Call Jan Boomer, 214-462-1013.
- October 24–25, 1996—**Alberta TESL** in Edmonton, Alberta.
- October 24–26, 1996—**New Mexico TESOL** at NM State University in Las Cruces, New Mexico.
- November 1–2, 1996—**Tex-TESOL State Conference** in Houston, Texas. Call Anne Albareli-Siegfried 713-443-5604.
- November 7–9, 1996—**Tri-TESOL V** in Seattle, Washington. Call Michele Morgan, Pacific Lutheran University, 206-536-5083.
- November 9, 1996—**Indiana TESOL**, in Indianapolis, Indiana. Call Ann Rambo, DePauw University, 317-658-4373.
- November 16, 1996—**Michigan TESOL** at Madonna University in Livonia, Michigan. Call Sarah Tipton, 313-577-2729.
- November 22–24, 1996—**New York State TESOL** in Saratoga Springs, New York. Call Dianna Segouia, 518-463-6624.

*If you have questions about conference information, you can call **Hands-on English** and we will try to help you!*

October march

We have received notice of a protest march on Washington, D.C. to be held on October 12, 1996. Called the "March for Justice," it will include immigrant groups and others urging respect for civil/individual/human/immigrant rights. You can find out more by contacting the Campaign for Immigrant Rights (American Friends Service Committee) in Cambridge, Massachusetts at 617-661-6130.

Laubach book fund

Laubach Literacy is seeking grant applications for its 1996 National Book Scholarship Fund. The Fund will distribute educational materials to adult literacy and education programs in the U.S. First priority is given to family literacy programs; grants are also awarded to programs that work with under-served populations.

For more information or to apply for a NBSF grant, contact Mara Roberts, project administrator, The National Book Scholarship Fund, Laubach Literacy, Box 131, Syracuse, NY 13210. Or call 315-422-9121, FAX 315-422-6369, email laubach@mailbox.syr.edu (Attn: NBSF Grant). Grant applications will be accepted until December 15, 1996.

"Crossroads Café" series

You may have already heard about "Crossroads Café," a learn-at-home video series with workbooks for ESL students. From what we've glimpsed of it so far, it seems interesting and promising.

According to Fran Keenan, National Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE), PBS TV stations in selected areas will be airing the series this fall so that students can watch it at home. Also, the following states have aquired video rights for their adult programs: Oregon, California, Illinois, Florida, and New York.

For information about purchasing or licensing the videos, contact Tracy Spellman at Intelecom (800) 537-2988, ext. 114. For information about the workbooks for the series, call Heinle and Heinle Publishers at (800) 553-6454.

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Publications:

All About Deafness, a resource guide by Salvatore J. Parlato, 1995, softcover, 76 pages, $9.95. To order, send your name and address with payment to: Dolores Parlato, 248 Seville Dr., Rochester, NY 14617.

Back issues of *Hands-on English* are available at $5 per copy. (If you are ordering 10 or more they are $4 each.) To order, contact the *Hands-on English* office. We can send you a list of back issues, if you like.

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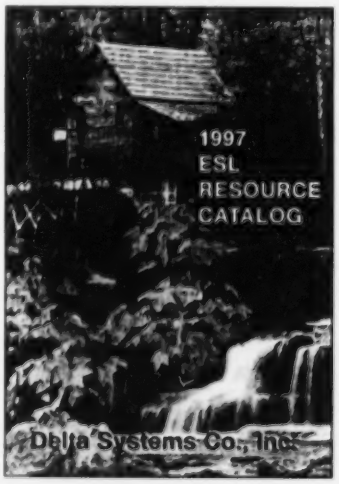

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Hints & tips

Do you have an ESL tip that works for you? Why not share it with our readers? Teachers and tutors are always looking for new ideas!

'Treasure chest' of game ideas

We've often suggested to readers that they keep an idea file handy for those moments when an activity is needed. Dianne Scott in Nashville, Tennessee takes this idea one step further by having the *students* collect the ideas they like!

Dianne writes: "I've developed a 'Treasure Chest' to use this year in class. It's an old file box, changed so it looks like an antique treasure chest. The students write down (to the best of their ability) games that they learned about, or particular activities we've done in class that they enjoyed. We place all these ideas that are written down on cards into the chest. Then, when the class is dragging along or we have a holiday, I bring out the treasure trove of ideas. One student gets to pick out a card. He or she reads the idea and. . .here we go!"

Sort those presidents!

Sal Parlato sends us this great idea for giving students practice alphabetizing. He gives the students a list of U.S. presidents in chronological order (George Washington through Bill Clinton) and asks the students to write their names in alphabetical order! (He has them write the last name first, as: Adams, John Quincy.) This would be a nice activity for newly literate students, as it involves a fair amount of writing.

This activity appears on page 139 of Sal's book, *America from A to Z*, available for $16.95 from American English Publications, tel. 718-667-6637. (But Sal will forgive you if you get that list of presidents from an encyclopedia—won't you, Sal?)

Another alphabetizing task might be to write a list of states, or countries, in alphabetical order. Students could work from a map to do this. These sound like fun, satisfying tasks.

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September/October issue

Volume 6, Number 4 November/December 1996

Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

Contents:

Letters 3

Crossword puzzle:
Holidays 4

Holiday activities:
Make a holiday calendar 5

Folding a paper cup 7

ESL games:
"Jeopardy" 8
Dictation relays 9
Musical chair variations 10

Hints & tips: 10

From the field:
Present yourself with a business card 11

Tools & techniques:
Grolier Encyclopedia on CD ROM .. 12

News & notes 14

Idea file:
A question-forming exercise 16

In this issue:

Games galore, and more

At this time of year, things get busy and hectic and teachers and students start getting tired. So, it's the time of year when teachers are looking for special activities for their students—what's needed are some end-of semester wrap-up activities to help students review what they've learned so far, and some fun activities to celebrate the season.

Fun stuff

In our last issue, we asked our readers for games, and—wow! did we get responses! This issue includes three of them which we know you'll enjoy trying out. First is a very well thought out version of the TV game "Jeopardy," which your students may be familiar with. Try it for a fun way of reviewing material the students have been working on.

"Dictation relays," another game we bring you in this issue, is one of those all-time winners—It's easy to prepare, it's active, it's adaptable to multi-level classes, it practices many language skills all at once, and it sounds like so much fun it makes this editor wish she were still in the classroom!

Thirdly, the charmingest game we bring you is "Musical chair variations." This activity manages to be exciting without being threatening—perfect for still-new students.

Tutors, too?

Tutors working with only one student sometimes wonder how they can make use of the classroom-style games we present. Indeed, these activities are more fun with a group. What we suggest for a special occasion is teaming up with one or more other tutors and their students to play some language games. This can be a refreshing change for everybody.

Cultural information

For both teachers and tutors, we hope you'll find the "Holidays" puzzle useful, as well as the calendar exercise that follows it. We know that students very much appreciate detailed information about special events in this country. It helps them to participate more fully.

That's why even a holiday party has an educational purpose—students see and experience customs that are familiar to everybody. (If you do have a party, consider doing the paper cup folding activity for something different, as well as useful!)

Your input

Our thanks to the wonderful people who shared these activities and ideas with us! Keep those ideas coming, and we'll continue to print games on a regular basis.

A bonus for you

You may have noticed that this issue came to you by first-class mail, instead of the usual bulk mail. We wanted to be sure you received it promptly, so we "splurged" a little—our holiday gift to you!

Happy holidays!

Hands-on **English**

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About the publication

Hands-on English has been helping teachers and tutors with practical teaching ideas since 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who taught ESL to adults in many different settings, and is familiar with the fun and the challenges involved.

Our articles and ideas are contributed by experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have an article or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

Who reads H.O.E.?

We thought you might be interested to know what a wide range our readership covers. We have subscribers working with ESL students in:

Refugee programs
Literacy programs
Community colleges
Colleges and universities
Correctional facilities
Resource centers
Adult Education programs
Volunteer tutoring
Intensive ESL programs
Teacher training programs
Religious organizations
Community Education programs
Secondary schools
Workplace education
Language institutes
Libraries . . . .and more!

What do our readers have in common? They are dedicated, they are working under sometimes difficult conditions, and they are looking for practical, adult materials that will help their students learn English.

About our Minigrants program

Hands-on English awards a few small grants (of up to $200 each) annually for practical classroom projects. Applications are due each April 30, and are available upon request.

Your editor, Anna Silliman, wishes all of our readers and their students a wonderful holiday season!

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149

Letters

We really enjoy hearing from you! It helps us to know what you like and don't like, and to hear what your students need.

Election results in

"Thanks to the September/October 1996 issue of *Hands-on English* my class and I enjoyed a successful lesson on 'Election Day.' I used your timely exercises: The Elections '96 multi-level dictation and crossword puzzle with ESL-1 students. The exercises were on target for their level of learning, yet challenging and entertaining. The students especially loved doing the crossword puzzle.

"Keep the creative juices flowing and the number of beginning level exercises increasing!

"In addition, I added my final touch to the lesson by designing 'secret' ballots for the class to vote in the presidential election. You might have guessed it—the class elected Bill Clinton as President of the United States—a week *before* Election Day!"

—Sharon Borakove
Brooklyn, New York

Advanced students need help

Several people contacted us to say they are looking for beginning-level activities. However, Nancy Hill in Tyler, Texas called to describe a problem with her *advanced* students.

She has students who read and write well and who speak rather fluently, but with a lot of errors. She says it's as if they had developed their own dialect. Does anyone have suggestions on how to approach teaching conversation to these students?

(The first thing that comes to our mind is dictations, which force a slow, careful look at certain language structures. Any other ideas?)

Hotel ESL?—readers respond

In our last issue a reader asked about materials for teaching students working in the hotel industry. Well, the response was heart-warming! Several readers called to say they had materials they had developed themselves, and were willing to share them with the writer. (We hope they'll share an activity or two with *Hands-on English*, also.)

In addition, Diana Della Costa wrote to tell us that the Orange County, Florida Public Schools published their own "Job Site ESOL Curriculum for the Hotel Industry" in 1991. It is available from Ann Jackson ELC/8, 445 W. Amelia St, Orlando, FL 32801.

Another reader, Lesley Clear in California, wrote to let us know about a video series available from NCLE (National Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education) called "Sharing What Works." One of the videos in this series is about the hotel workplace ESL classes at the Arlington,Virginia Education and Employment Program. Each tape is $40—call NCLE at 202-429-9292, ext. 200 to ask about this.

Hands-on index

We still have copies of our index to the first four volumes of *Hands-on English*. You're welcome to have a copy (just send us a self-addressed, stamped envelope) although it doesn't include the last year and a half of issues.

We're currently working on a computer version of the index, and when we get it up-to-date we'll announce it.

Mailing problems

Occasionally a reader contacts us because they haven't received their issue. We just want to let you know that if that's the case, we'll be happy to send you a replacement issue as soon as possible.

We don't want your students to miss out on anything!

Editorial?

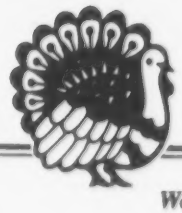
We had a great editorial planned for you about the future of ESL, but ran out of room in this issue to put it in. And we *know* you'd rather get lots of great activities for teaching than be harangued at so we'll save the harangue until next issue!

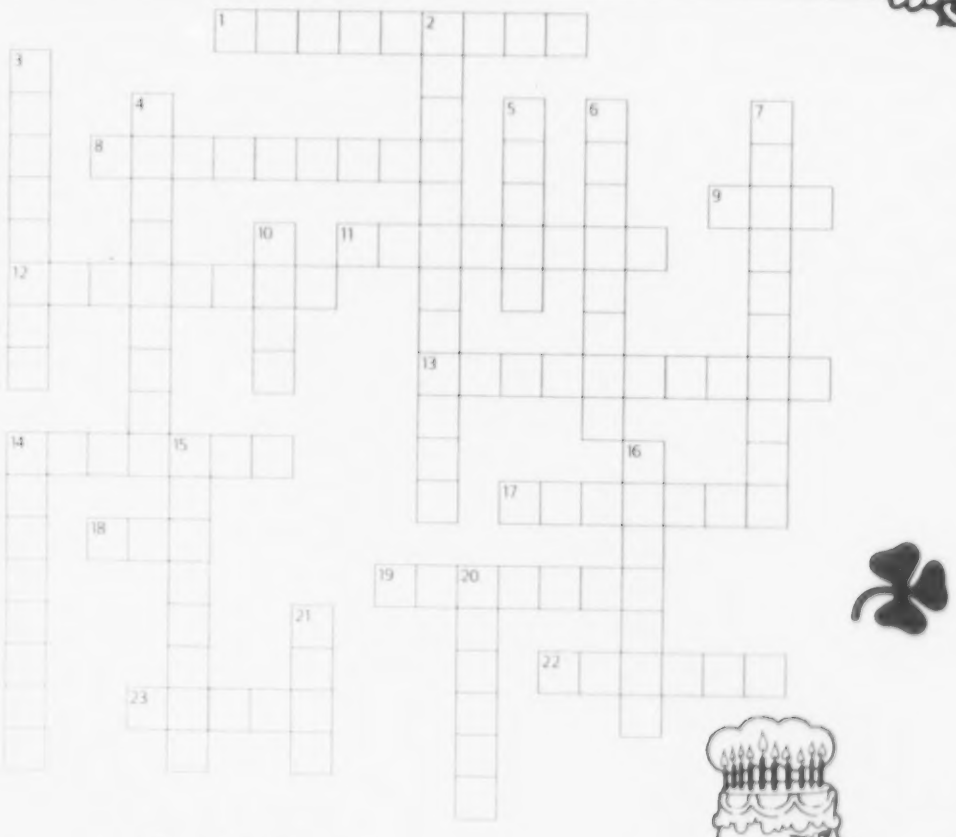
In the meantime, we'd like to leave you with one end-of-the year thought, for all the dedicated, hard-working people out there:

You're giving more than you realize.

Happy teaching!

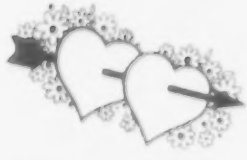
Crossword puzzle:
Holidays





Word list:

Chinese
Christmas
Columbus
Easter
Election
Eve
Father's
Fool's
Halloween
Hannukkah
July
Labor
Martin
Memorial
Mother's
New
Passover
Patrick's
President's
Ramadan
Rosh
Thanksgiving
Valentine's
Veterans'



Across clues

1. _____ is a religious holiday for Christians, to celebrate the birth of Jesus. It is on December 25th. This season is also a traditional time to give gifts and put up decorations.

8. _____ is on October 31st. Children wear costumes and go out to ask for candy. They say "Trick or treat!"

9. ____ Year's Day is on January 1st. Most schools and businesses are closed.

11. _____ is a religious holiday for Jews, to celebrate their freedom from slavery in Egypt. It is usually in April.

12. ____ Day is on the 2nd Monday in October. This man first discovered America for the Europeans in 1492.

13. ____ Day is on February 14th. People like to send a card or flowers to someone they love. You see red hearts everywhere as a symbol of love.

14. ____ Day is on the 2nd Sunday in May. People give a card or a gift to their female parent.

17. ____ Day is on the 3rd Sunday in June. People give a card or gift to their male parent.

18. New Year's ___ is on the night of December 31st. It is a time for parties, especially for adults.

19. _____ is a time of fasting for Muslims, and is an important time in their religion. It is usually in October (depending on the moon).

22. _____ is a religious holiday for Christians, to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. It is usually in April.

23. April _____ Day is on April 1st. It is not really a holiday, but people like to play jokes on this day.

Holiday puzzle, cont'd...

Down clues

2. _____ is a feast day for Americans. Many people cook a turkey for a big family dinner. It is always on the 4th Thursday of November.
3. St. _____ Day is on March 17th. It is an Irish holiday, but many Americans celebrate with parades or by wearing green clothing.
4. _____ is the eight-day Jewish festival of lights. It is usually in December.
5. _____ Day is on the first Monday in September. It is a day of rest to honor workers.
6. _____ Day is on November 11. Schools and offices are closed to honor soldiers who fought in past wars.
7. _____ Day is on the 3rd Monday of February. Schools and offices are closed to honor Washington and Lincoln, two famous American leaders.
10. The Fourth of _____ is Independence Day in American history. You can see fireworks in the evening.
14. _____ Day is on the 4th Monday in May. This is the day to remember the war dead. Also, if the weather is nice, many people like to have a picnic on that weekend.
15. _____ Day is not a holiday! This is the day people vote. It is always on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November.
16. _____ New Year is usually in February. Many people in Asia celebrate the new year on this day.
20. Dr. _____ Luther King's birthday is on January 15th. He was a famous black leader who worked for civil rights in the U.S.
21. _____ Hashanah is the Jewish New Year. It is usually in October.

Make your own holiday/special events calendar!

In the crossword puzzle you will find information about 24 different holidays and special events. Write the name and the correct date for each one on your own calendar (see next page).

Certain holidays (such as Easter) are on a different date each year. You will have to look at a published calendar for this year to find the exact date.

After you have filled in these holidays, add any other holidays or special events that you know about. Also, write in your birthday and any other important birthdays to remember!

(There is a blank calendar for you to use on the next page.)

Question:

There is one month with no holiday or special event. What month is that?

Holidays and special events

year: _____

January	February	March
April	May	June
July	August	September
October	November	December

Holiday activity:
Folding a paper cup

by Margaret V. Richey, Roberts Wesleyan College in Rochester, New York.

Just in time for your holiday party, here is a hands-on listening activity for low-intermediate to advanced students. If they listen carefully and follow your instructions, each student will end up with a small drinking cup made origami-style from folded paper.

You'll need photocopy paper for best results because it holds liquid without leaking, and students can drink out of the cups. I usually save this activity to celebrate a special occasion such as a student's birthday.

Before beginning the project, I introduce or review the necessary vocabulary (fold, corner, left, right, triangle, closest to, farthest from). Then I pass out clean square pieces of photocopy paper (8½" by 8½") and ask students to have a pencil ready. I read the directions slowly, repeating as often as necessary, while circulating among the students to ensure each one has completed each step.

Directions for Folding a Paper Cup

1. Place the paper on your desk so that one of the corners of the paper points toward you.
2. Write the letter A on the corner closest to you.

   Write the letter B on the left side of the paper.

   Write the letter C on the corner farthest away from you.

   Write the letter D on the corner on the right side of the paper.
3. Turn the paper over.

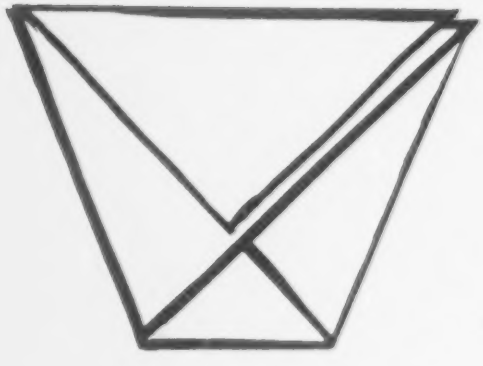
   Write the letter A on the back of corner A.

   Write the letter B on the back of corner B.

   Write the letter C on the back of corner C.

   Write the letter D on the back of corner D.

   Turn the paper over again.
4. Place corner A on top of corner C and fold the paper. You should have a triangle.
5. Place corner D at the center of side A–B and fold the paper. You should see 3 triangles.
6. Find the end of the fold you just made which is closest to corner A, and write the letter E at that end of the fold.
7. Place corner B on E and fold.
8. Fold corner A forward.
9. Turn the paper over. Fold corner C forward.
10. Open the top—you now have a very nice cup.



ESL games: "Jeopardy"

A vocabulary review game

This is an especially good review for long units or semesters. You need quite a bit of vocabulary to do it well.

I make three significant changes from the TV version. First, students do not have to say, "What is..." when they answer. This removes a lot of confusion. Second, I mix questions and statements to suit our learning needs. (Mr. Trebek, on TV, uses only statements.) Third, I add a White Elephant, or "wild" category, being sure to explain to students what this is.

Preparation

Using vocabulary from recent lessons, create at least 4 different categories, plus one White Elephant category. For example, the categories for beginners could be: numbers, the calendar, dialog completion (from formula conversations), and telling time. For each category, write 5 instructions (tasks for the students to complete) OR questions. These should range from easy to difficult. Here are some examples from the "calendar" category:

10 Name the days of the week in order.
20 Name the months of the year in order.
30 Read this date: December 1, 1976 (I write it on the board)
40 Write on the board: February 25, 1996 (dictation; spelling must be correct)
50 When is your birthday? (oral response)

For the White Elephant category, use anything you want—it's a fun category. Birthdays, historical dates, favorite foods and colors, and cultural information all make good White Elephants.

How to do it

Write the categories on the board with 10, 20, 30, 40, and 50 written under each of them.

In class, divide the students into two teams. Only one person on the team can respond at a time, though points are accrued as a team. Student #1 on Team A chooses a category and point level ("Numbers for 10 points"). You read that question. If he or she answers correctly, award 10 points to Team A and remove that question from the board, then go to Student #1 on Team B. (However, if even one part of the question was missed, do not award points and leave the question on the board.)

The next student on Team B can choose any category and point level he or she wants, including any that previous students missed. Continue back and forth until all the questions have been answered.

At the end, if neither team can answer a particular question, review it as a class.

Other options

Variation 1: If Student #1 on Team A gets the right answer, continue to Student #2 on the same team and so on until somebody misses. Then go to Student #1 on Team B.

Variation 2: Set a time limit for responses. Fifteen seconds is generally a reasonable one.

Variation 3: Include Daily Double questions somewhere in your questions.

Variation 4: At the end, have one big Final Jeopardy question. Make it worth a lot of points, especially if one team is way behind the other. This gives one last chance for anyone to win the game. (This is also good if you run out of class time but need to close out the game.)

Advanced students?

If you have advanced students, or a multi-level class that includes advanced students, perhaps they would enjoy helping to prepare the questions for a Jeopardy game. Play the game once (with your own questions) so they can see how it works. Then have the students work in small groups. Each group should choose a category (you can offer suggestions), then write questions for each level on that category.

Secret tip: If the students write the questions, they are reviewing class material twice; once to prepare the game and once to play!

Adapted for ESL by Lynette Bowen, Plainview, Texas.

Lynette's version of Jeopardy seems like a great end of the year activity. She tells us: "Games are especially helpful for reviewing topics and units, and for getting things moving (literally!) on days when folks are a little draggy."

ESL games:
Dictation relays

by Jack Bailey, Santa Barbara Adult Education in Santa Barbara, California.

Like a lot of good ESL activities, this one may get a little noisy. We hope your neighbors won't mind, since it's for a good cause!

This activity really gets students on their feet! One partner runs out to look at a posted dictation text, remembers as much of it as he or she can, then runs back and "relays" it to a partner, who writes it down.

It's great for the classroom as it can be used for almost any subject, at any level of difficulty, and it uses multiple skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking, negotiating for meaning, etc.).

What are dictation relays?

Student pairs alternate the task of dictating and writing posted material. The teacher first posts several copies of the dictation material outside of the room, or around the room if there's space.

The reader memorizes sections of the posted material and then dictates from memory to the writer at his desk. This continues until pairs are signaled to switch. Pairs try to complete the task as quickly and accurately as possible. Students who finish early can read the sentences or passage together to check for accuracy.

When most of the class is finished, student volunteers can either recite the material or write it on the board for class approval.

Uses

The beauty of Dictation Relays lies in their versatility. They can be formatted to address a multitude of curriculum areas, including:

The basic alphabet:
"ABZ FYI PQE RLO"

Pronunciation of vowels:
"Pass the flat stack of captive crabs."

Pronunciation of contrasting pairs
(e/i) "his feet fit each shoe."

Pronunciation of blended pairs:
("L" clusters) "The splendid cloth blouse floated slowly with the gloves."

Colloquialisms:
"Are you gonna gimme your number?"

Tongue twisters:
"She sells seashells by the seashore."

Vocabulary:
"The lightning from the storm lit up the sky."

Introduction or reinforcement of any grammar point:
Verb teases, contractions, adjectives, adverbs, numbers, ordinals, irregular verbs, etc.

Idioms:
"I thought she was pulling my leg but she wasn't joking!"

Review of reading passages or stories.

Teaching notes

The dictating students should be encouraged to remember sentence "chunks". Spelling can be emphasized or not, depending on the activity focus. You may want to pre-teach some questions for the scribe, such as "How do you spell ___?" or "Could you please repeat that part?"

Sample dictation relay

(Practicing subject/predicate questions in the simple present)

Person #1, relay the following to your partner:

1. Does Jack have a car?
   Yes, he has a blue Honda.
2. Who teaches in room 17?
   Avra and Marjory do.
3. Why does Doug want a sweatshirt?
   He wants one because they are in fashion.

(Now change! Partner #2 reads!)

Person #2, relay the following to your partner:

4. Who rides a bike to school?
   Alfredo does.
5. How many people live in Santa Barbara?
   About 140,000 people live here.
6. When does Bus #32 leave the transit center?
   It leaves at 8:40 in the morning.

Multi-level groups?

You can customize this activity for different levels of students by posting different levels of dictation text simultaneously. Label the texts A, B and C and then tell the advanced student pairs to work on level C, for example.

An advantage to having students working on different texts is that pairs who complete their task early can try another level just for fun.

ESL games:
Musical chair variations

Another name for this activity might be "pass the picture!" You'll see what we mean when you try it out.

You are probably already familiar with the traditional parlor game of musical chairs—people move around the room until the music stops, then grab a seat quickly because one person will be left "out." Here are some language variations on this concept which are fun to play, although fortunately quite a bit less raucous than the original!

Vocab review

The first variation works especially well with beginners, to review vocabulary they have learned. Make some flash cards with words, numbers, sentences, math problems, pictures, or any other concept you have been teaching and wish to review. Even colored pieces of construction paper work well when teaching colors.

Simply have the students pass the cards or items around while the music is playing. When the music stops, call out the name of an item and the student who has it must hold it up for everyone to see. (This would be fun to do with realia, too!)

The next variation would require more active participation—write a question or math problem on a card and have the students pass it around until the music stops—the student who holds the card must read the question aloud and answer it!

A third variation is an interesting way to practice a role-play or dialogue the students have been working on. Separate the students into two groups (for example, housekeepers and supervisors) for the role play. Give one sign to each group so they know who they are. Have the students pass the sign around until the music stops. The two students who are left holding the signs must then stand and role play the dialogue for the class. When they are done, these two students stay out of the circles while the game continues until everyone has had a chance to role play at least once.

—contributed by Diana Della Costa, from the workforce instructors at Mid-Florida Tech, Kissimmee, Florida.

Hints & tips

Do you have an ESL tip that works for you? Why not share it with our readers? Teachers and tutors are always looking for new ideas!

Beginning materials

Diana Della Costa responds to our query in the last issue about ideas for working with beginning students. She suggests bringing in an old telephone to class. "You can use it to practice ordering a pizza, or calling in sick and making a doctor's appointment."

Also, she recommends two publications with reproducible materials for the classroom:

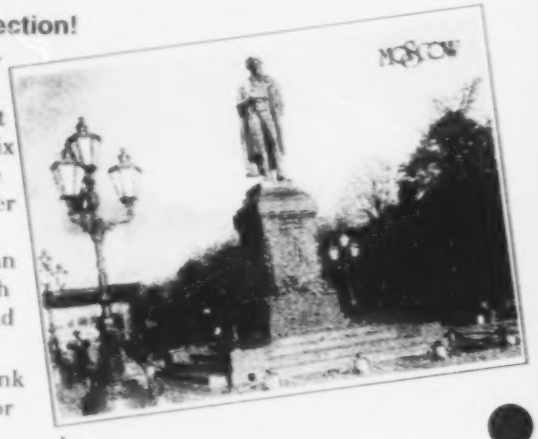
Cuing In: Activities on Blackline Masters for Beginning Writers of English by Claudia J. Rucinski, published by Lifelong Learning Books/ Scott, Foresman and Co.

Reproducibles, 200 Words You Need to Know by Kathy Sammis, published by J. Weston Walch, Portland, Maine.

Editor's note: For reading materials for beginning students, Linmore Publishing has a number of very useful titles, including some that work with pre-literate students. Call them for a copy of their catalog at 1-800-336-3656 or fax 847-382-0409.

Share that collection!

Margo Menconi, our correspondent in Siberia, writes: "I've collected post cards since I was about six and I use them from time to time in class. I bet other people have such 'useful' collections, too. I was in an intensive course once with someone who collected and used magnets!"



We can certainly think of lots of good ESL uses for post cards. . .and for stamps. . .hmm, what about that rock collection in the attic??

157

From the field:

Present yourself—with a business card!

In our last issue, we asked readers to share their business cards with us. Many teachers and tutors don't bother to get a card made, but we think it can be an important step toward enhancing your professional self-esteem. It's also a good way to introduce the concept of ESL to those you meet, and garner some respect for the field.

So, hold your head up high and go get a business card! Here are two examples to inspire you.

More examples?

If you have a business card that works for you, send us a copy—we'll share them to inspire our readers.

From Florida

A reader from Florida, Diana Della Costa writes, "People call me 'Smiley' because they say I usually have a bright smile on my face." The graphic she chose for her card therefore reflects her personality, to help people identify and remember her.

This is clearly someone who wears at least two hats, and she's included both her titles effectively on one card—but without too much clutter. We're guessing she's hard to reach by phone where she works (a common dilemma for instructors) so the choice of including the home phone only may be a smart one.

The original card is raised maroon print on buff-colored cardstock.

The original card is raised blue print on white cardstock.

From New York

Our correspondent in upstate New York, Sal Parlato, also has a memorable graphic on his card. Sal writes, "The characters represent 'Sal' in Chinese—at least according to my friend who had it made in Hong Kong."

We happen to know that Sal also wears several hats (teaching elementary school and publishing books among them), but he has chosen not to enumerate these on the card. That makes for a more generally useful card, that won't go out of date!

Tools & techniques:

The Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia

by Karima Benremouga, Emporia State University in Emporia, Kansas.

Here's an example of how you can make good use of new technology, even if you aren't a computer whiz yourself. In fact, if there are no computer facilities available to you, your students can probably even do this activity at a local library.

Useful for ESL

The Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia can be used in an ESL classroom in a variety of ways. The **Grolier** (1995 edition) offers 55 short video clips, 30 one-minute animations, 11 animated maps, 33,000 articles, 18 narrated tours covering topics such as architecture, the human body, and space exploration.

There are two ways students and teachers can use the Encyclopedia. They can use it to search for specific information about a specific topic they want to learn about, or they can explore different aspects of the program and learn about information as they go—all this for an insignificant price.

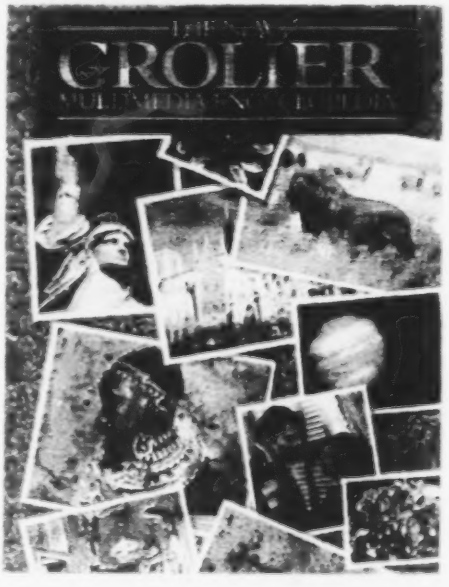
Because it is updated every year, you can find older versions of the Grolier for about $30 at a computer store or other super stores. Other similar encyclopedias are: Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia and Microsoft Encarta.

Clearly labeled and brightly colored, **Compton's** (1995 edition) is so easy to use that most users do not need assistance with it. It includes 33,000 articles, 30 videoclips, 11 animations, 43 narrated slide shows and a built-in dictionary.

Encarta (1995 edition) is especially appealing to children with its simulated activities, 2,000 audio clips, 29 video clips, and 83 animated illustrations. It contains a total of 26,000 articles. It is also available in stores for about $40.

On the following page are suggestions for using the Grolier Encyclopedia in an ESL classroom. The exercises can be done in a computer lab with the assistance of a teacher or a lab monitor. When we did this at the Applied English Center at the University of Kansas, the teachers required that the students go back a second time and research a topic on their own.

A nice way to start the search exercise (see next page) is for several students to work together on the same topic until they understand how the program works. As they start researching individual topics, you'll need to discuss with each student the possible approaches they can take, as well as how to focus their questions.



Grolier Encyclopedia, cont'd. . .

Note: if your students enjoy this search exercise they could repeat it with another topic, and a fresh copy of the worksheet.

Examples of general topics:
technology
architecture
weather

Examples of research questions:
How has the use of satellites changed television technology?
How has art influenced architecture?
How does weather affect agriculture?

Key words:
satellites, television technology
art, architecture
weather, agriculture

Search Worksheet 1 (to be done in a computer lab with the teacher)

1. Write your topic (a general word or phrase): _____
2. Do a search for your topic.
   How many articles did you find for your topic? _____
   Is it too broad? (more than about 30 articles) _____
   Is it too narrow? (fewer than about 10 articles) _____
   Is it just right? (between 10 and 30 articles) _____
3. Write your topic again in the form of a research question:
   _____?
4. Circle the key words in your research question.
5. Do another search for the key words combined.
   Is it too broad? _____
   Is it too narrow? _____
   Is it just right? _____
6. Revise the search if necessary by changing the key words. If the search is too broad, look through the list of articles to find other words you could use. Add them to the search list, and try again. If the search is too narrow, delete one of the key words from the search, and try again.
7. Keep notes on related terms in the Title List during your searches. You might want to use them later when you revise your search or when you are looking for support of your thesis.

Notes:

Grolier Encyclopedia Assignment

(This is just a sample of an exercise that you can give your students to do on their own. The instructions are for the Macintosh version, and the steps may not apply to your version of the encyclopedia.)

Musical instruments:

1. Check out the Grolier Encyclopedia CD from the lab assistant.
2. Put the CD in the machine and double-click on the icon to open it.
3. Click once on Pictures.
4. Click once on Fine Arts.
5. Click once on Music.
6. Click once on Musical Instruments. Then click on the + in the upper right-hand corner.
7. Double-click on Banjo. Then click once on the headphone to hear the sound the banjo makes.
8. Click the close box for the Banjo window.
9. Repeat steps 7 and 8 for some of the other instruments. Write down the name of each instrument you listen to.
10. Click in the close box for the Picture Index window.

News & notes

Upcoming conferences

- November 22–24, 1996—**New York State TESOL** in Saratoga Springs, New York. Call Dianna Segouia, 518-463-6624.
- December 27–30, 1996—**Modern Language Association of America (MLA)** in Washington, DC. Contact MLA, fax 212-477-9863.
- January 4–5, 1997—**National Adjunct Faculty Guild (NAFG)** in Washington, DC.
- February 4–8, 1997—**National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE)** in Albuquerque,New Mexico. Call NABE at 202-898-1829.
- March 11–15, 1997—**Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)** in Orlando, Florida. Call TESOL at 703-836-0774.

Calendar available

Do you have students from many cultures? A World Calendar which includes national, civic and religious holidays of more than 100 countries and other helpful information is available from Educational Extension Systems (EES), P.O. Box 472, Waynesboro, PA 17268.

The Calendar is $12.50 plus $3.00 postage. Toll-free call 1-800-447-8561.

Need for ESLclasses

For a report on waiting lists for ESL programs in 11 states, see the latest **NCLE Notes** newsletter (Fall 1996). They collected information about huge waiting lists and long wait times, especially in urban areas.

This is useful information to point out to anyone who thinks immigrants don't want to learn English! At the moment, demand exceeds the supply.

(NCLE is the National Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education and is funded through the U.S. Department of Education. To receive their free newsletter call 202-429-9292, ext. 200 or send an email to: ncle@cal.org)

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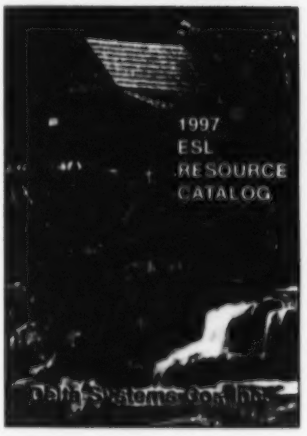

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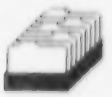
Idea file:
Ask me some questions. . .



—by Jim Ford, Adult ESL, Binghamton City School District in Binghamton, New York

Save this activity in your "idea file," for one of those times when there's an extra few minutes to fill. You'll have a valuable exercise at your fingertips.

Ask me some questions

Purpose: Practice forming questions
Level: Adaptable to any level; good for review
Time: 5–20 minutes
Materials: A list of question topics

Have students respond orally:

1. Ask me what time it is.
2. Ask me where he works.
3. Ask me where they live.
4. Ask me how old my son is.
5. Ask me where I buy my groceries.
6. Ask me what she's doing.
7. Ask me when the next bus comes.
8. Ask me if I like ice cream.
9. Ask me if it snows in Boston in January.
10. Ask me how I'm feeling today.

Other possible topics: holidays, current events, material the students have been studying recently; opinions.

Follow-up: This works well as a written exercise also.

Hands-on
English
A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult ESL
P.O. Box 256
Crete, NE 68333-0256
USA

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

November/December issue

Volume 6, Number 5 January/February 1997

Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

Contents:

Letters 3

ESL games: A categories word game 4

Minigrant report: A Mystery Party ... 6

Multi-level cross-word puzzle: Winter 8

On the market: Teaching Multilevel classes in ESL 10

Editorial: A new set of demands 10

Online opportunities: Linguistic Funland 11

Reading activity: Obituaries 12

Hints & tips 13

News & notes 14

Idea file: Brainstorm a category 16

Announcing: Minigrants available

We are pleased to announce our Minigrants competition for 1997. Application forms are now available upon request from the *Hands-on English* office; applications are due by April 30th.

We are especially proud because this will be the sixth year running that we offer these grants. Many wonderful projects have been funded by one of our grants, and you can see an example of one project on page 6 and 7 of this issue.

This year we will award a minimum of five grants, worth up to $200 each, to support a classroom project.

Examples of projects

Some past projects that have won a Minigrant over the years include: a writing incentive project to donate a paperback to students who write three stories, a snapshot project in which students made their own lesson materials from snapshots they took on a field trip, and a consumer economics projects in which students presented reports based on their comparative shopping.

Who may apply?

Anyone who works with ESL students may apply, that is, teachers or tutors who have a project they wish to do with their students. We are looking for innovative ideas for teaching ESL.

How are the grants awarded?

We will set up a committee of ESL and literacy professionals who will help us to judge the applications on a rating scale. The five projects rated highest will be our 1997 awardees.

Why give Minigrants?

Hands-on English is dedicated to helping ESL teachers and tutors in the most practical way possible, and this seems like the best way to demonstrate that. Also, we enjoy giving the awardees some much-deserved publicity for their work.

Many awardees have been able to use the grant to apply for further funding. They also can get a little local publicity for their program. Plus, we hope they get a boost to the self-esteem!

By the way, all of our grant funding comes from our operating budget (subscriptions and advertising in *Hands-on English*). We don't have an outside source for funding at this time.

From tiny grants, big payoffs grow!

Hands-on **English**

Volume 6, Number 5
January/February 1997

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About the publication

Hands-on English has been helping teachers and tutors with practical teaching ideas since 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who taught ESL to adults in many different settings, and is familiar with the fun and the challenges involved.

Our articles and ideas are contributed by experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have an article or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

Who reads H.O.E.?

We thought you might be interested to know what a wide range our readership covers. We have subscribers working with ESL students in:

- Refugee programs
- Literacy programs
- Community colleges
- Colleges and universities
- Correctional facilities
- Resource centers
- Adult Education programs
- Volunteer tutoring
- Intensive ESL programs
- Teacher training programs
- Religious organizations
- Community Education programs
- Secondary schools
- Workplace education
- Language institutes
- Libraries . . . and more!

What do our readers have in common? They are dedicated, they are working under sometimes difficult conditions, and they are looking for practical, adult materials that will help their students learn English.

About our Minigrants program

Hands-on English awards a few small grants (of up to $200 each) annually for practical classroom projects. Applications are due each April 30 and are available upon request.

Editor Anna Silliman: "Our New Year's resolution? To help you make this a fun, inspiring teaching year!"

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Letters

Citizenship materials?

Two readers have contacted us recently (one in Wisconsin, one in New York) asking about materials and tips for teaching citizenship classes. We know there are plenty of published materials on this, but which ones to choose?

If you can recommend materials for citizenship instruction, please let us know—we'll publish the information in our next issue. Also we'd be pleased to hear any tips or advice from you if you have experience with citizenship courses. Thank you!

Searching for video

"Do you know if anyone has the VCR cassette of *Ten Famous Men*? It was a gift from TIME for student subscriptions about ten years ago or so. I have called them—they no longer have any available. Thanks."

—Sr. Mary Appolonia
Immaculata College
Box 694, Immaculata, PA 19345

Culture instruction

"I have a mixed level group of women from China and Malaysia who live in a Buddhist "city." I appreciate the cultural aspects [in Hands-on English] that I can pass on because they do not watch television or get "out" in the real world too much. They are WONDERFUL STUDENTS!

—Nicole Willis
Redwood Valley, CA

It's almost hard to imagine not watching television! Sounds nice, actually.

Out of a job

"Keep up the excellent work! I still enjoy and look forward to each issue, although I have joined the ranks of the underemployed, disenfranchised part-time adult educators. My ESL job was eliminated last August, and I lost about 20 hours a week.

"Any thoughts on establishing an 'employment opportunities' forum in the journal?"

—Maureen King
North Branford, CT

First of all, our condolences on your lost job! We feel sad every time we hear this story from one of our readers—both for you and for your students!

You're not the first to ask about job listings in ***Hands-on English****—we've had a couple of such requests recently. I think it wouldn't be very practical for us to list job openings in the publication. There's a time-lag problem, for one thing, and we're so widely distributed geographically for another.*

However, with help from our readers we could produce an article about job hunting in the field of ESL in general, with lists of resources, advice, websites, etc. that might benefit those looking for work. Anybody have suggestions to help get us started?

In the meantime, you can get online and try browsing for job listings on the Internet—this is likely to be the most up-to-date source for published job listings *(see Online opportunities, p. 11).*

Letting off steam

A reader wrote to us recently: "Our work seems so important, yet it is incredibly disdained by those in power. Thanks for letting me vent!"

We often feel this way too. We just have to keep doing the right things, and keep encouraging each other.

Here's a good idea—how about getting an ESL teacher nominated for a Nobel Prize? They'd respect us ***then****, by golly!*

. . . and calls

Cuddle up with H.O.E.

We spoke recently with one of our readers on the phone, who was unfortunately laid up with a back injury. Nonetheless, she told us, she took her issue of *Hands-on English* with her to bed and read it cover to cover. Now that's a loyal reader!

ESL game:
A categories word game

We first saw this game in Richard Yorkey's book, *Springboards; Interacting in English* (1984 Addison-Wesley, ISBN 0- 201-09910-1). He has three very nice copyable examples of this game in that book. (He also mentions that it was an old-fashioned parlor game.)

Then we heard from one of our readers, Jolene Ibrahim in Des Moines, Iowa, that she had learned this game from a student from Latvia! By coincidence our contributor Meg Gam in New York sent us *her* version of the same game, which she likes to use because she says it gets the students talking, smiling and laughing, and makes the room really noisy.

So, we are convinced that the game is traditional, international, and useful for ESL students!

How to play

One way to play this game (Jolene Ibrahim's version) is as a race between individual students. Each student gets a paper with categories on it, and as the teacher calls out a letter, tries to write a word in each category that starts with that letter. Everyone stops writing when the fastest student is done. Points are awarded for each correct answer, then another round is played using the next letter.

Then, if someone has an answer that no one else thought of, they get extra points. This would be a good way to play the game if the students are relatively advanced.

Meg Gam has her students play this as a team game, and this would probably work better for beginning level students. Each team gets one copy of the paper, and a secretary for the group writes down the words the students think of for each category. Meg gives them only one category at a time, though, with about 3 to 5 minutes to work on each category.

Points are awarded for each correct answer, and at the end of the game students compile all of their answers into one list.

In the Yorkey version, the students get all the categories and all the letters on a handout, and they have to think of five words for each one. He has them playing in teams also, but this would work for individual students just as well.

Make-your-own

We have provided some examples of the game for you to try with your students, but of course you can substitute your own categories, and new letters, when you play. It might be useful review, for example, to give categories that your students have been studying about recently. Remember to allow more time if the category is less familiar.

Any way you play it, this categories game is useful for vocabulary practice and spelling, and can be a lot of fun.

	Articles of clothing	People's names	Countries	Food
T				
S				
L				
A				
R				

Word game, continued

	Things that are blue	Things that are white	Things that are green	Things that are red
D				
L				
O				
N				
T				

	Science	Business	Music	Literature
B				
E				
G				
M				
W				

	Jobs	Sports	Education	Health
A				
H				
P				
S				
C				

Minigrants award winner '96

Mystery party

This activity is a role-play of a mystery story, in which each student plays a character who has certain clues about a murder. The students use their language skills to prepare themselves to interact with the other characters.

Preparation

The preparation for the Murder Mystery Party was incorporated into the regular class curriculum. On some days the discussion of the mystery would take the whole class meeting, other times only part.

On the first class meeting the Murder Mystery was introduced. Since the students are living in Texas, I chose the Murder Mystery game kit, *Bullets 'N' Barbecue*, which is set in the Old West. The game kit included a party planner guide booklet with the rules and instructions, which we read and discussed.

The characters or suspects of the murder were introduced in the second and third class meetings. A paragraph description of each of the six characters, which came with the game kit, gave the students insights into the personality, history, physical appearance and style of dress of each character. The characters' names also revealed something about the suspects. They were: Sally Forth, Bibi Gunn, Miss Patience, Rowdy Azell, Doc Mallard, and Juan Bandito. We discussed the more obvious puns, the slang, idioms and new vocabulary in the descriptions. The conversation was lively and humorous. At this point I asked the students to begin to think about the character they would like to play.

Props and costumes

Once the students understood the premise of the game they were ready to find clothing to fit each suspect. On two afternoons we took field trips to find western style clothing. Goodwill Industries provided ample selections and every student was happy with their costume. (None of the students were familiar with Goodwill and so they were very interested in the shopping.)

As part of the project I asked students to help with the food for the party. Our menu included southwestern cooking and Mexican foods, since the setting for the story was in the Old West. We went as a class to the grocery store. We located the Mexican food section and I pointed out some of the ingredients we would be using. During our final class before the party everyone received a recipe and chose a partner with whom to work.

The party

The party took place in the 'Drygulch Saloon,' a large room decorated like a saloon in the Old West to give the right ambiance. The students arrived in costume. Three other guests were also invited—they also came in costume and were able to help the students individually as the party progressed.

Following the instructions for the game, we listened to a tape which summarized the events before the murder. (I had compiled a list of new vocabulary words and we had studied these beforehand.) Each student received a booklet which contained the dialogues to be read, which revealed clues to solve the murder, as well as some secret information.

After each dialogue the students had to formulate questions for the other suspects and to defend themselves against accusations, based on the information they each had. This was a particularly good exercise in speaking English because the students had to improvise.

The results

The Murder Mystery Party was a success and an enjoyable learning experience. The students learned about a part of romanticized American history; they experimented in cooking a popular ethnic food and practiced their English. Every aspect of the project encouraged discussion, questions and comparisons.

I will repeat the exercise with a different group of students in the future. The game kit, costumes and props can all be used again. Next time I would probably have the students practice more of the language ahead of time, without revealing any clues, of course. I would recommend this project to other tutors with intermediate or advanced students.

by ***Rebecca Anderson****, tutor at the Commerce Library Literacy Program in Commerce, Texas.*

Rebecca's eight students come from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Japan. Their English is at different levels, but they all needed a chance to practice conversational English. This activity gave them a great opportunity to do that!

Materials used:

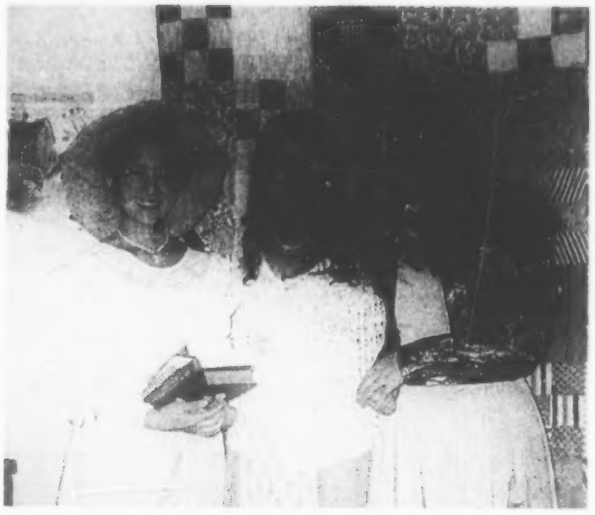
A game kit called *Murder a la Carte: Bullets 'N' Barbecue* by BePuzzled, Inc (available at game specialty stores).

The materials are written for native speakers and so would not be appropriate for beginning ESL students, but work well with more advanced students.

***Juan Bandito**, played by Chih-Hsien Teng*

***Bibi Gunn**, played by Jenny Wang*

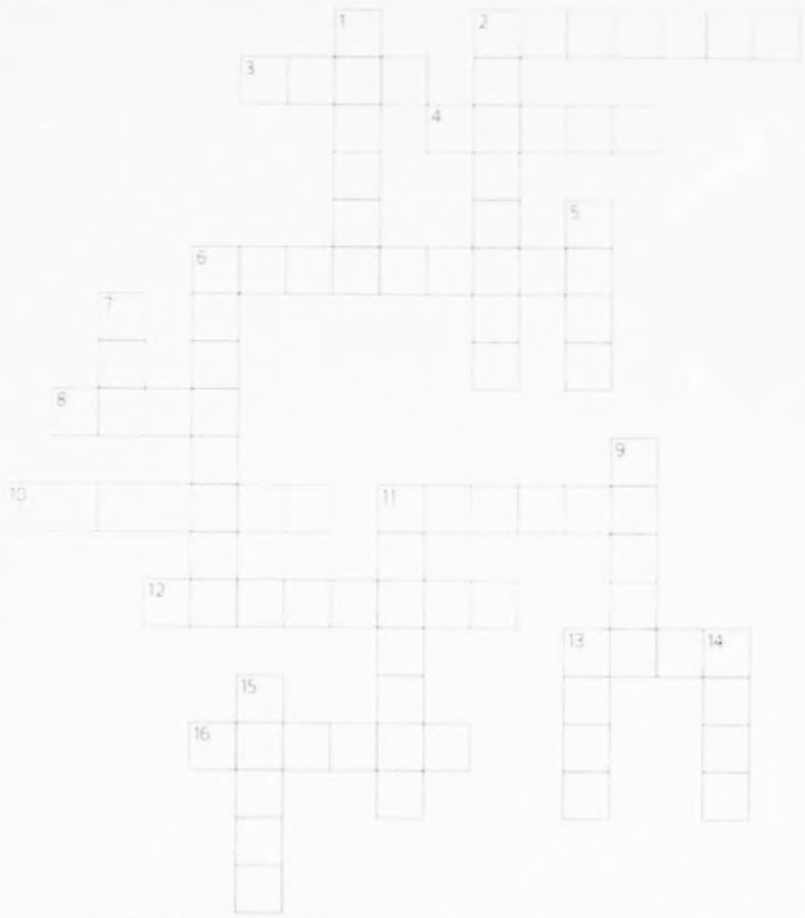
Who did it ??



***Miss Patience**,played by Yumiko Heath*
***An innocent resident of Drygulch**, played by Hillary Hui*
***Sally Forth**, played byJane Hu*

***Rowdy Azell**, played by Jack Cheng*
***Doc Mallard**, played by Shanchao Hu*

Multi-level crossword puzzle:
Winter



Word list

blizzard
boots
brown
cancel
cold
feet
football
frostbite
gloves
heat
ice
January
party
shorter
shopping
snow
soup
warmer
weather
wind

Level B (harder)

Across clues

2. opposite of longer
3. low temperature
4. warm clothing for your feet
6. a dangerous skin problem caused by cold weather
8. a measurement; one yard=3 _____
10. the coldest month
11. opposite of colder
12. a big winter storm with snow
13. like rain, but frozen
16. If there is too much snow, they might _____ school tomorrow.

Down clues

1. clothing for your hands
2. you can buy things at a _____ mall
5. if you are too cold, turn up the ____
6. a fall and winter sport
7. frozen water
9. a dark winter color
11. news about the temperature
13. a hot liquid meal
14. cold blowing air
15. a get-together with friends

To the instructor: *Copy the puzzle, clues and word list separately, and let students choose which level to try. (Offer the word list only if they are stumped.) Once finished, the students might wish to do the puzzle again with the other set of clues.*

Level A (easier)

Across clues

2. In the winter, the days are _____ than in the summer.
3. In many places in North America, the weather is very _____ in the winter.
4. If you are going to go walking in the snow, it's a good idea to wear _____ on your feet instead of shoes.
6. Please be careful! If you stay outside in the cold you can get _____ on your face or hands.
8. In Minnesota they had three _____ of snow in one snowstorm. That's a lot of snow!
10. In many parts of North America, _____ is the coldest month of the year.
11. The winter is _____ in the south and colder in the north.
12. "Did you hear the news? There's a big winter storm coming!" "Yes, the weatherman says it's going to be a _____!"
13. Many children love winter because they can have a lot of fun outside. They like to slide down the hill in the _____.
16. If it's very cold tomorrow, they will _____ school. The children will have to stay home.

Down clues

1. Don't forget to wear your _____ so your hands don't get cold!
2. When the weather is very cold, many people like to go to the _____ mall. Some people walk there for exercise.
5. Do you have gas or electric _____ in your house?
6. "Do you like to watch _____ games on TV?" "No, I really don't understand this sport."
7. Be careful when you drive home. The road is slippery because of the _____.
9. In the winter, the grass is a _____ color and it looks dead.
11. "Did you listen to the _____ report on the news?" "Yes—they said it will be very cold tonight."
13. Would you like a bowl of hot _____? I'm sure it will make you feel warmer.
14. The _____ is blowing hard today. I lost my hat and had to run across the street to get it.
15. We are having a birthday _____ for my brother on Saturday. Would you like to come?

Follow-up

A student in Minnesota is writing to her sister in Texas. Fill in the missing words in her letter.

Dear Marta,

We are having a very _____ winter this year! The temperature has been below zero. Recently we had three _____ of snow. I had to buy some new _____ to keep my feet warm. I hope the _____ gets warmer soon! The children are happy, though, because they like playing in the _____.

Right after New Years, on _____ 2nd, we had a small birthday _____ for Alfredo. Thank you for the _____ you sent him! They are very nice, and they will keep his hands warm.

I hope we can see you soon. Come for a visit, but wait until spring when it's _____!

Love,

Isa

On the market

Reviews of useful ESL materials

Teaching Multilevel Classes in ESL *by Jill Bell (1991 Dominie Press, Inc., 1-800-232-4570) $14.95 ISBN 1-56270-032-4*

If there is one thing our readers have asked for more than anything else, it is help with teaching multi-level classes. Teaching a multi-level ESL class is a huge challenge for even the most experienced teacher.

This book is not your "hands-on" type of material that will solve your problem with one trip to the copy machine. Rather, it is a thoughtful book that takes some reading, thinking and digesting to benefit from.

Three of the beneficial concepts in the book are: organizing a class around a theme, self-access materials, and ongoing assessment.

It makes sense that no teacher could possibly prepare separate lessons for each of the different levels in the class. But as Jill Bell very clearly shows, it is possible to organize your whole class around one theme, then prepare lessons at different levels on that theme for your students. This allows the class to work part of the time together as a whole class and part of the time in smaller groups. The author gives some detailed examples of this process so you can see clearly how to implement it.

In any multi-level class, the students should learn to take more responsibility for their own learning. Bell's idea of using self-access (or individual study) materials for part of the class is a highly developed example of this. Of course, preparing the materials ahead of time is still a big job, and she gives plenty of ideas on how to develop your own materials.

Finally, learning to integrate ongoing assessment of some kind into your teaching helps your students to see what they are learning, to make goals, and to have input into the process. We're not sure whether Bell's discussion of assessment is the final word, but it's a good start in the right direction.

If you're going to be teaching a multi-level class, or you are teaching one and need help, you really ought to spend a weekend with this book.

Editorial

A new set of demands

With the new year underway, and many of the federal funding crises of the past year resolved, at least for the short term, we'd like to take this opportunity to list what we think every ESL instructor should have, in order to do a great job:

1. Space large enough for the number of students.
2. Secure storage for teaching materials.
3. A materials budget, with materials selected by teachers.
4. Copying facilities with no hassles.
5. Reliable mail delivery at school.
6. Access to a phone (at least to call out).
7. Office hours, or space and time set aside to meet students outside of class.
8. Options for professional development, on an ongoing basis.
9. Class size appropriate to the teaching goals of the course!
10. Pay and benefits that increase over time; recognition of service.
11. A job description that outlines the tasks expected of a teacher.
12. Support and help with things that need doing outside the job description.
13. Administrators who take input from teachers about the needs of their students.
14. Respect for our students should be visible in the institution. Celebrate our successes.

"Coping" is not enough

Since no doubt more demands will be put on teachers in the future in terms of accountability, let's raise our expectations of what a good program should provide so that we can do it.

Online opportunities:
Linguistic Funland

by Meg Gam, ESL teacher in New York, NY.

Note:
***ESL**, English as a Second Language (a term used within the U.S.), **EFL**, English as a Foreign Language (a term used overseas), **ESOL**, English for Speakers of Other Languages (a term often used by literacy organizations) and **TESL** or **TESOL**, Teaching of, etc., (terms used in the context of teacher training or professional activity) are all used on the Internet. There are differences among these, but all will lead you to potentially useful information.*

Wherever you want to go is here!

The World Wide Web grows daily by leaps and bounds, it seems. You're connected, you can get there, but. . .where should you go to find ESL/EFL/ESOL information? Linguistic Funland is one of the first, and perhaps still the best, of the ESL websites for information on what's going on and what is available on the Internet, and in the world in general, for ESL professionals and students alike.

A starting point

What exactly is Linguistic Funland? It is a website with a vast collection of links to *other* websites of interest to students and teachers of ESL, as well as other Internet resources. What that means to you, the intrepid (or timid) Internet explorer is that you can surf on over to Linguistic Funland right from the start and connect to just about everything worthwhile in ESL on the Internet. There is even an automated sign-up for various ESL email mailing lists, which makes it ever so easy to sign up for these useful sources of information. If you're new to the Internet and you want to explore ESL, you would do well to start here, as it connects to just about every other place there is. It would take hours or even whole days to exhaust all the possibilities Linguistic Funland links to.

What's linked to Linguistic Funland? When you first go there, you choose the option for ESL, and go directly to a page of informational links. Each of these choices takes you in a different direction. You'll find sites which give ready-made lesson plans, others which can help you get a new job, and still others which will put you (and/or your students) in contact with fresh new ideas, from around the world, about how to teach (or learn) English. Linguistic Funland brings the best and brightest of the world's ESL websites together under one roof.

Here are some of the choices you can click on:

ESL/EFL study programs/teacher training and programs for students has links to various schools and institutions offering study opportunities for those who wish to learn English and also for teachers.

Job opportunities in TESL has links to different sites where job ads for ESL/EFL positions are posted, including a number of major US newspapers.

Exercises/activities for ESL students is a section which links to sites where students can practice their English skills.

Articles and essays of interest contains links to different articles on ESL available on the Internet.

Fun, interesting, cultural sites is a collection of links useful either to the teacher as a source of information/inspiration or to the student looking for ways to practice English skills.

Email pen-pal opportunities has connections for sources of pen-pals for ESL students worldwide.

Organizations and journals provides links to various ESL organizations, as well as information on and links to professional and student online and print journals.

Materials and software is a listing of commercial enterprises which offer ESL teaching materials and software. Here you can link directly to the provider.

Projects by ESL students will link you directly to different sites which have student projects, to get ideas, and see how what other students in the world are up to.

Grant info on the net connects you to US government grant information sites.

Info on TOEFL and testing takes you to sites which give info on the various ESL/EFL tests available worldwide.

Each time you visit Linguistic Funland, you'll be able to find something new and interesting — the owner of Linguistic Funland, Kristina Pfaff, is constantly updating the site and adding to the links as new sites come online. Visit Linguistic Funland once and you'll agree that wherever you want to go *is* here.

Address

Where is Linguistic Funland? Linguistic Funland has its own brand-new website with an easy-as-pie URL:
http://www.linguistic-funland.com

Reading activity:
Obituaries

Sagan dies

Many people will remember Carl Sagan as a great scientist and educator. He died December 20, 1996 at age 62 after a long battle with leukemia.

Sagan was born in New York City. His father was born in Russia. He studied astronomy and biology in school. Later he became a professor of astronomy at Cornell University.

During his lifetime, Sagan wrote and coauthored more than 20 books. He wrote about the stars, and about life on other planets. His most famous work, though, was a 13-part television series called "Cosmos." In it Sagan tries to explain the role of human beings in the universe.

Sagan was an important help to NASA when they planned their unmanned space flights to the planets. In his work about the planet Venus, Sagan discovered and proved the "greenhouse gas effect," which is important for us on Earth as well. We now know that too much pollution in the air can heat up the earth.

Carl Sagan was also important for world peace. He helped to reduce the threat of nuclear weapons with his theory of "nuclear winter." He explained that if anybody uses nuclear weapons, the world's climate would be destroyed.

Sagan believed strongly that there must be extraterrestial life (life on other planets). No one has ever seen evidence of this, so we don't know if it's true. Sagan hoped to find evidence of life in the stars in his lifetime. Perhaps some day he will be proved right.

Questions

1. How old was Carl Sagan when he died?

2. What year was he born?

3. What kind of science did he study?

4. What is "Cosmos"?

5. What two important theories did Carl Sagan prove?

6. What did Sagan want to find on other planets?

7. Do you believe there is life on other planets?

Hints & tips

Do you have an ESL tip that works for you? Why not share it with our readers? Teachers and tutors are always looking for new ideas!

Scrabble variation

Stephina Brewer in Phoenix, Arizona, writes to tell us that she uses a simplified version of Scrabble with her students. She makes cards for the letters, referring to the Scrabble gameboard to find out how many of each letter to make. (Another teacher places the little game pieces on the copier, makes a copy and then cuts them out.)

The goal for the students is to spell any word they can with their pieces, but they don't necessarily have to connect their word to the others, as in the 'real' game. Stef comments that for advanced students you can always bump up the rules a little to challenge them.

For an exciting team game, she divides the class into two groups. Each group uses and reuses the letters as quickly as they can to make words. Their team receives a point for each letter used. You need a scorekeeper for each group, who writes the words on the board as the students make them. At the end of the game, the letters are counted up and the final tally announced.

Multi-level picture stories

Maureen Maher in Bishop, Georgia, teaches multi-level classes for an EvenStart Family Literacy Program. She responds to our eternal plea for activities appropriate for multi-level ESL classes with this activity.

You need a sequence of pictures that tell a story. Maureen uses a book called *Action English Pictures* by Noriko Takahashi and Maxine Frauman-Prickel, from Prentice Hall (ISBN 013-009077-8).

These sequences, such as "Taking a Plane" or "Washing Dishes" work well because each student, beginner, intermediate, or advanced, can respond to the pictures based on their ability. Here is a sample lesson:

1.) The students sit in a circle, with a large writing pad (or a blackboard) visible to all.

2.) Pass the first picture in the sequence around the circle (you may want to enlarge it on a copier first). Ask the group what they think about the first picture.

Examples:

Taking a Plane—A typical response for the first picture from a beginner may be "The man goes on vacation." An intermediate may respond "The man is going to go on a vacation in the plane." A more advanced student might say "The man has a suitcase in his hand because he is going to take the plane to go on his vacation."

Washing Dishes—For the first picture a beginner might say "The dishes are dirty," an intermediate "The dishes need to be washed," and a more advanced student "The man has let the dishes pile up." This part allows the students to speak and listen to each other.

3.) After they finish speaking about all the pictures, students write sentences for each picture. Try to call on students at varying levels to write sentences on the writing pad. There should be at least a couple of options for each picture.

This is a good chance for students to practice writing and learn new vocabulary within the context of pictures that relate closely to their daily life experiences.

Read the obits

Jolene Ibrahim teaches at the Des Moines Area Community College in Des Moines, Iowa. She writes:

"Something interesting that I do each semester is to cut out obituaries from the newspaper. I attach a questionnaire asking things like: what organizations was the person a member of, how many children/grandchildren did they have, what were their children's names, where did they work, where are the memorial services, where are they going to be buried, were they a member of any church, how old was the person, what did they die of, and what was their name and address?

"This not only helps make students more familiar with the newspaper, but also allows them to learn new vocabulary, cultural information and local news."

*Note: **Hands-on English** thinks this idea is brilliant! (We should have thought of this ourselves.) We've written an obituary for you (p.12) to try out the idea.*

News & notes

Upcoming conferences

◆ February 4–8, 1997—**National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE)** international conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Call 202-898-1829 or email nabe97@nabe.org

◆ February 28–March 1, 1997—**Massachusetts TESOL (MATESOL)** Conference in Randolph, Mass. Contact Linda Schulman, 617-237-1763.

◆ March 11–15, 1997—International TESOL conference in Orlando, Florida. Call 703-836-0774 or email conv@tesol.ed. Conference info also available at http://www.tesol.edu

◆ April 17–20, 1997—**California TESOL (CATESOL)** conference in Fresno, Calif.

Buy a house?

The Fannie Mae Foundation is launching a campaign to help end discrimination in home sales, and to increase the number of minorities and immigrants who are homeowners.

Part of this campaign is better consumer information for potential homeowners. The FMA is offering a free teaching text called "How to Buy a Home in the United States" with both a teacher's guide and student book. You can request copies of these by calling 1-800-544-9224.

Hands-on, the index

By the time you read this we will have an up-to-date index of all past issues of *Hands-on English*, ready for mailing. The articles are arranged by heading (Tools & techniques, Grammar grab-bag, etc) and should make it a little easier to find the article you're looking for in your vast collection of *Hands-on English* issues!

We'll send you a free copy, if you mail us a stamped, self-addressed long envelope. (Readers outside the U.S. may request the index, too—we'll pay the postage.)

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You can place a text ad in ***Hands-on English*** *for $10 an issue. Ads must be 30 words or less.*

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Idea file

We have presented a number of ideas for using categories in ESL, including the activity in this issue on page 4. For any of these activities, here is a handy list of categories for you to use.

Keep this card handy, for those times when you need an idea in a hurry!

Brainstorm a category

Purpose: Vocabulary review, student interaction
Level: Adapts to any level
Time: Half an hour or more.
Materials: Blank paper.

In small groups, have students brainstorm as many words for a selected category as possible. Then compile these as a class into a word map.

Categories:
1. Things in the: kitchen, bathroom, bedroom, livingroom.
2. Things in the: house, school, hospital, supermarket.
3. Parts of the body, articles of clothing.
4. Things you can: read, write, eat, look at.
4. Reasons for: happiness, sadness.
5. Ways to improve: English, health, this city.
6. Places you can: practice English, get something to read, eat, hear music.
7. Things you: Like to eat/do, Don't like to eat/do.
8. Kinds of jobs.
9. Relatives.

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Contents:

Letters 3

From the field: Teaching for citizenship 4

Reading activity: About eyeglasses .. 6

Writing: Multi-level dictation 7

Crossword puzzle: Past tense verbs ... 8

Tools& techniques: A video chalkboard 9

Grammar grab-bag: Pronouncing '-ED' endings 10

Hints & tips: Speaking activity, kids' books and playing cards 12

News & notes 13

Online opportunities 13

Editorial:

A plea for books

One of the demands we feel instructors should be making of their programs is for more books and materials for their students. Too often, ESL teachers in adult programs are getting by with little or no appropriate materials in the form of *legal* copies, and are resorting to other-than-legal copies to instruct their students. This is a shameful state of affairs that must not continue.

Recently we read a very thoughtful book review of the New Readers Press ESL text, *LifePrints*. (The review was printed in the Winter 1996, Vol. 6, No. 2 issue of TESOL Journal, and is worth reading if you haven't seen it.) The reviewers liked this material, which is useful for students in refugee programs. They commented though, that very often in such programs "students are not given copies of textbooks to use in their ESL classes. Instead, teachers are given a set of textbooks and told to make copies for use in their classes." This practice is widespread, and it is illegal.

True confessions

Now, we don't want to sound holier-than-thou, because back when we were still teaching, like a lot of teachers we also made illegal copies to teach from, because we wanted the best for the students. But we argued then, and still feel now, that it's not fair to the teacher, who has to run around getting all those copies sometimes at his or her own expense, it's not fair to the publishers, who need income in order to continue producing quality materials, and it's not fair to the students, who have to sort through those masses of confusing handouts.

Now that much public funding for adult education has been restored (at least for now), lack of funds is no excuse. If programs expect teachers to produce results, they must supply the necessary materials for teaching. Would a company hire a computer programmer to do a job, expecting him to steal the software to do it with? Certainly no reputable company would, and public programs must adhere to a higher standard anyway.

One of the challenges of teaching ESL is finding appropriate lesson material for the wide range of student levels, needs and goals that we meet in every class. Language learning is complex, perhaps more so than many other subjects, and no one resource will ever be the solution to good language teaching. Programs should recognize this by providing for a wide range of materials and resources that teachers can draw from in serving their students.

Many instructors buy their resource materials out of their own pockets. If you do this, you're not alone—most professional educators do this. It's a mark of dedication and an investment in your own career. However if a school or agency wants to establish a good program they should be investing in resource materials that will be available to all the instructors and will provide continuity and substance to their program. And unless students are able to purchase their own texts, programs should provide textbooks for students to take home and learn from.

Money will have to be spent. Books are not optional—they are a necessity.

Hands-on English

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About the publication

Hands-on English has been helping teachers and tutors with practical teaching ideas since 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who taught ESL to adults in many different settings, and is familiar with the fun and the challenges involved.

Our articles and ideas are contributed by experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have an article or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

Who reads H.O.E.?

We thought you might be interested to know what a wide range our readership covers. We have subscribers working with ESL students in:

Refugee programs
Literacy programs
Community colleges
Colleges and universities
Correctional facilities
Resource centers
Adult Education programs
Volunteer tutoring
Intensive ESL programs
Teacher training programs
Religious organizations
Community Education programs
Secondary schools
Workplace education
Language institutes
Libraries . . . .and more!

What do our readers have in common? They are dedicated, they are working under sometimes difficult conditions, and they are looking for practical, adult materials that will help their students learn English.

About our Minigrants program

Hands-on English awards a few small grants (of up to $200 each) annually for practical classroom projects. Applications are due each April 30, and are available upon request.

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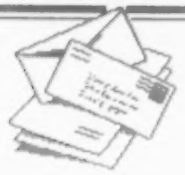
Letters



Response to our "demands"

In our last issue, we published an editorial, listing 14 things we think an ESL program should provide, in order for instructors to do a good job. (See Vol. 6, No. 5, p. 10)Several readers responded enthusiastically to our list!

"...It is appalling that so many professionals are willing to work in situations which meet few or even none of your critearia, but it seems to me that a list such as yours is the best way to begin to achieve better teaching conditions.

"I'm planning to share your list with our faculty. I think they'll be as surprised as I was to discover how many of those items we have won over the past 10+ years."

—Sue Sandeen
Gainesville, FL

"I really appreciate your editorial. It really strikes a chord with me. We have no secure method of storage. Most of our teaching materials are left in a room that is used for daycare during the day. Needless to say, our computer was broken, our realia box had soda dumped in it, we've had books colored in, and the tables are always a sticky mess before class.

"There is no time to meet with students outside of class unless we schedule home visits. There is never access to a copier unless prior arrangements are made a couple of days in advance. This is fine as long as no one extra shows up for class, or you have a request for additional material. The only phone available is the teacher's cellular that she brings in and pays for herself if it is needed.

"My job as coordinator of the ESL program is to facilitate class schedules and to provide the teacher with tutors. I also recruit students and work on retention. I feel that the items you mentioned are absolutely necessary to a quality program. I have asked for these things since I have had this position. I will be sharing your editorial with the program administrator in hopes that she will see that I am not asking for too much.

"I always look forward to receiving *Hands-on English*. Keep up the good work!"

—Vickie Cook, Centralia, IL

ESL for elders?

"I enjoy reading *Hands-on English* and find that it has many interesting ideas. My husband and I have begun ESL classes at our church 2 nights a week to help the Russian immigrants in our community. I teach the beginners, who are all in their 60's and 70's.

"I know that there are ESL materials designed for teaching adults, but because of the ages of my students, some of it is irrelevant—for instance, they are not really interested in "how to get a job," etc.

"I was wondering if youknow of any ESL materials that are designed specifically for teaching older adults? Any information you could give me would be helpful. Thank you!"

—Pam Snyder
Collingdale, PA

We don't know of materials written for this audience, but would suggest pulling activities from many sources that seem appropriate to your students' interests. Do any of our readers have more specific suggestions?

Needs conversational English

"I'm doing one-to-one ESL tutoring with a Chinese gentleman who has a PhD from Beijing University. He works for a computer company. All employees and managers speak Chinese. He speaks reasonably good English but wants to improve his ability to speak conversational English. We read a variety of material. I have found poetry as perhaps the most helpful way to improve his speaking ability. Any other ideas?"

—Alden F. Jacobs
Piscataway, NJ

What you are doing—working from what your student is really interested in—is the right approach! Perhaps our readers can provide some further teaching ideas.

Is there a community group your student would like to get involved in? For example, a local computer club, a parent-teacher organization, etc. This would be another way to get conversation practice.

From the field:
Teaching for citizenship

In our last issue, we asked readers to help us with ideas for teaching citizenship. We got lots of responses! Here are some of them:

Forms and info

First of all, thanks to **Janet Hunerdosse** in Madison, Wisconsin for telling us about the INS Web site on the Internet. This government site has a page of "Frequently Asked Questions" about applying for U.S. citizenship. The address is http://www.usdoj.gov/ins/faq/faq.html

The address for the INS home page is http://www.usdoj.gov/ins/index.html

Look under "Public Information" and you can find immigration statistics by country, application forms to download (or to send for by mail) and other information.

Diana Della Costa in Kissimmee, Florida, recommends teachers get a copy of the "Application for Naturalization" and have students practice filling out this 12-part form in class. To have a copy of this form sent to you by mail, call 1-800-870-3676 and ask for INS Form N-400 (Application for Naturalization). Note: some citizenship textbooks include this form as well, but it won't hurt to see the most up-to-date version of it.

Books and materials

A number of readers contacted us to recommend materials. **Zoë Dixon** in Los Angeles, California, has given workshops on citizenship instruction and recommends two texts:

Voices of Freedom: English and Civics for the U.S. Citizenship Exam by Bill Bliss & Steven J. Molinsky (1994 Prentice Hall Regents) ISBN 0-13-035684-0

Zoe's comments: "The reading in Bliss & Molinsky's book is manageable for intermediate level students. The layout is clear and the illustrations are good. The book features target grammar structures for each chapter. Test-taking skills, dictations, and interview questions are included as well."

U.S. Citizen, Yes: Interactive Citizenship Preparation by Ronna Magy (1996 Heinle & Heinle) ISBN 0-8384-6714-8 A cassette tape is also available.

Zoe says: "The readings in Magy's book are more challenging, but it does contain an appendix of tips for beginning level instruction. There are many visual aids in the book such as photos, charts, and historical timelines. It is more communicative in its approach than the Bliss book. It features profiles of actual ESL learners and encourages students to share their own experiences, knowledge and opinions. The variety of activities (games, roleplays, partner and small group discussions, writing sections) is an attractive feature."

Citizenship Now: A Guide for Naturalization by Aliza Becker and Laurie Edwards (1995 Contemporary Books). Cassette tape also available.

This book was brought to our attention by **Kerry Ann Gardner** in Texas who told us "I spoke with the ESL teacher who is using this material. She reports that the students love the book and want to use it every class. These are two classes of women who are native Spanish speakers. They are intermediate for our program, probably 4th to 5th grade reading level. The main reported strengths were 1) it stimulates conversation and 2) it contains a wealth of good information."

Techniques

Multiple choice—Zoë Dixon points out that many of these texts lack practice with bubble-type answer sheets, although many students are opting to take this kind of exam in lieu of an extended interview. "Students who are not familiar with these types of forms may need some orientation on their use. An overhead projector and a transparency of a blank form are very helpful in illustrating bubble form completion," she tells us.

Mock interviews—Diana Della Costa reports that in her program the instructors do mock interviews with each student (including some questions, the Pledge of Allegiance, some writing, etc.) which they videotape.

Citizenship Questions—The list of 100 citizenship questions which students have to be prepared to answer is available from many different published sources. However, they are generally not

in any particular order. To make sense of these, **Fiona Armstrong** in New York City groups them into categories for teaching: i.e., flag questions, presidents, national holidays, places, famous people. She then draws from many sources, as well as teacher-made materials, to help the students understand the material.

Confidence building—Several teachers mentioned confidence as one of the main goals of their classes, as students are often aware of the limitations of their English. This goal is reached with lots of practice, repetition, role-playing and more practice.

Adapting for lower levels

Much of the citizenship material published is at an intermediate level of English or higher. If you have beginning level students, or literacy level, you'll need to do a lot of adapting for them. Fiona Armstrong is working with such students, and she sent us a description of some of the methods she uses to help the students learn the material.

"I start for example with the easy questions about the flag. I place each question on a color coded sheet, and the answer on another. I bring in a real flag and we discuss it and identify the parts. Then I display the questions on the board, using magnets, and I wait to see who has an answer (one of my firmest beliefs is that there is always someone in the room who can answer; if you just wait the information will come from them). Then I place the answers on the other side of the board for them to look at, read, repeat, translate for one another, and people come up to match question and answer. We review the material several times that week and at regular intervals

"I also hand out the sheets and people circulate to find their partner to match question and answer. I put the answers on the board and hand out the questions. People read the questions aloud to the class. We are working for immediate automatic oral responses, then recognition of the written form of the question. As another review I also make a sheet of the questions with all the answers listed below and the students choose and write the answers.

"Then we move on to another category. Sometimes we are matching pictures and names, or dates and events on our flash cards. Always there is a follow-up sheet of questions with answers to choose from. Gradually we move towards more abstract material, relating it to what they know and how they interact with government—the 3 branches of government, federal, state and local government.

"When we move to the Constitution, a helpful technique for remembering a difficult statement is to place it on the board: 'The first ten amendments to the Constitution are called the Bill of Rights.' A student is asked to come up and erase one word, then repeat the whole. Then another erases a word and so on until there is nothing left but a series of lines. Then everyone comes up to fill in one missing word.

"The most frightening part of the citizenship process can be the dictated sentences, so I collect some sample sentences and regularly dictate them to the class."

"We really celebrate when someone finally becomes a citizen..."

—Fiona Armstrong

Suggestions in brief

contributed by Zoe Dixon

Integrate content and language objectives in the lesson

Focus on:
- Requesting forms by phone or in person
- N-400 form completion
- Having photographs and fingerprints taken
- Submitting documents and fees
- Multiple-choice test taking and dictation
- Interviewing, from the greeting and handshake to the goodbye
- Taking the oath of citizenship

Use the newspaper for illustrations of classroom topics in action

Encourage students to discuss government/civic activity that impacts their own lives

Use video excerpts and folk songs to fill out history lessons

Include roleplays, re-enactments and debates

Refer legal questions to legal professionals!

Reading activity:
About eyeglasses

By ***Janice Hervieux,*** *Pensacola, Florida.*

Jan likes to write easy-to-read passages that are of interest to her students. In this case, some of her older students were concerned that they would need expensive glasses, because they were having trouble reading. She wanted them to know that there were other options.

Prescription glasses and drugstore glasses

When a person can see everything very well,
we say the person has "20-20" vision.

When a person *can't* see very well
things that are close (near)
but *can* see things that are far away,
the person is "farsighted."

When a person can't see very well
things that are far away,
but can see things that are close,
the person is "nearsighted."

Children

Sometimes a child in school can't see the chalkboard.
Usually the child moves to a seat closer to the board.
Sometimes the child goes to an eye doctor.
The eye doctor gives the child a test,
and writes a prescription for glasses.
Prescription glasses are very expensive.

Adults

Often when people are 40 years old,
they start to become farsighted.
Often these people don't need to buy
expensive prescription eyeglasses.
They can go to a drugstore
and try on the eyeglasses that
are on a display rack.

Some of the glasses are weak and some are strong.
Maybe they will find a pair of glasses
that will help them see better.
These glasses cost around $15.00.

Writing:
A multi-level dictation

Level A—Prescription glasses and drugstore glasses

When a person can _____ everything very well, we _____ the person has "20-20" vision. When a person *can't* see very _____ things that are close but *can* see things that are _____ away, the person is "farsighted." When a person _____ see very well things that are far _____, but can see things that are _____, the person is "nearsighted."

Sometimes a child in _____ can't see the chalkboard. Usually the _____ moves to a seat closer to the board. Sometimes the child goes to an eye _____ . The eye doctor _____ the child a test, and writes a prescription for _____ . Prescription glasses are _____ expensive.

Often when people are 40 years _____ , they start to become farsighted. Often these _____ don't need to buy _____ prescription eyeglasses. They can _____ to a drugstore and try on the _____ that are on a display rack. Some of the glasses are weak and some are _____ . Maybe they will find a _____ of glasses that will help them _____ better. These glasses cost around _____.

Level B—Prescription glasses and drugstore glasses

When a _____ can see everything _____ _____ , we say _____ _____ _____ "20-20" vision. When a person *can't* see very well things _____ _____ _____ but *can* see things _____ _____ _____ away, the person is "farsighted." When a person _____ _____ _____ _____ things that are far away, but can see things that are close, the person _____ _____.

Sometimes a _____ _____ _____ can't see the chalkboard. Usually the child moves to a seat _____ _____ _____ _____ . Sometimes the child _____ _____ an eye doctor. The eye doctor _____ _____ _____ a test, and _____ a prescription _____ glasses. Prescription glasses _____ _____ expensive.

Often when people are 40 _____ _____ , they start to become farsighted. Often _____ people _____ _____ _____ _____ expensive prescription eyeglasses. They _____ _____ _____ a drugstore and try on _____ _____ that are on a display rack. Some of _____ _____ are weak and _____ are strong. Maybe _____ _____ _____ a pair of glasses that will help them see _____. These glasses _____ around $15.00.

Level C—Prescription glasses and drugstore glasses

When a person _____ _____ _____ very well, _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ "20-20" vision. When a person _____ _____ _____ _____ things _____ _____ _____ but *can* see _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ , the person is "farsighted." When a person _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ far away, but can see things that are close, _____ _____ _____ "nearsighted."

_____ a child in school _____ _____ _____ _____. Usually the child _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ to the board. Sometimes the child _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ . The _____ doctor _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ , and _____ _____ _____ _____ glasses. Prescription glasses _____ _____ _____ .

Often _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ , they _____ _____ become farsighted. Often these people _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ prescription eyeglasses. They can _____ _____ _____ _____ and _____ _____ the eyeglasses that are on a display rack. _____ _____ _____ _____ are _____ and some _____ _____ . Maybe they will _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ that will _____ _____ _____ _____. These _____ _____ _____ $15.00.

***Notes to the instructor**—If at all possible, enlarge each of these sections on your copier before handing them out to your students, so they are easier to read and write on (speaking of eye problems!!).*

Tell the students that Level A is the easiest, and Level C the hardest, and let them choose which level to try. (You can also offer a Level D, which is a blank page, for the most advanced students.). Read the sentences at natural speed, pausing in between and repeating sentences as often as necessary.

When students are finished, they can help each other correct their writing. Note that beginners can help advanced students correct, because they have a more complete text! Students might like to try the dictation again at a higher level, so have extra copies ready.

138

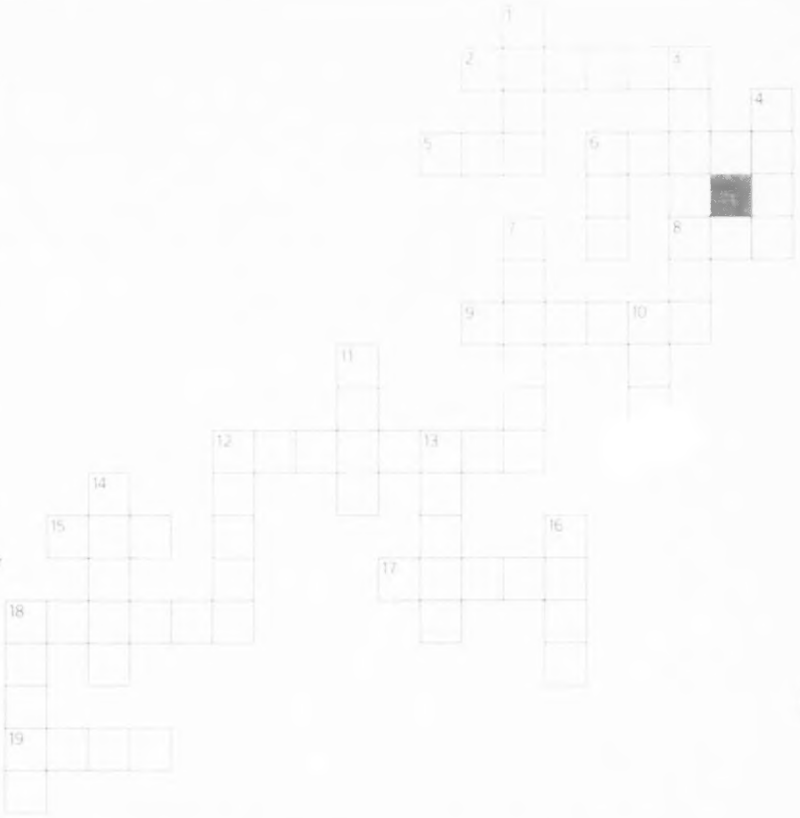
Crossword puzzle:
Past tense verbs

Across clues

2. "Did you remember to bring your library card?" "No, sorry— I _____."
5. "Did you do your homework?" "Yes, I _____."
6. I couldn't understand what the policeman said. He ____ too fast.
8. "Are you still looking for a job?" "No, I _____ a job. It starts on Monday."
9. They didn't have any ground pork at the grocery store, so I _____ ground beef instead.
12. "Are you done with your test?" "No, I'm not _____ yet. I have three more questions to answer."
15. I didn't eat dinner at home last night. I _____ at a friend's house.
17. "Did you go to your brother's house by bus?" "No, we _____ there in the car. It only takes about 20 minutes."
18. I missed the bus this morning, so I _____ to school instead.
19. "Did you take your medicine today?" "Yes, I _____ it this morning."

Down clues

1. "Hello. Do you have a used bicycle to sell?" "We did, but we _____ it yesterday. Sorry."
3. "What did you think about this book?" "I _____ it was very interesting."
4. "Are your relatives still visiting you?" "No, they _____ yesterday. It was nice to see them."
6. I _____ something funny on TV last night.
7. I don't smoke cigarettes anymore. I _____ when I was younger, but four years ago I quit.
10. "Do you have a garden?" "Not here. I _____ a garden in my home country."
11. I didn't say "fifteen," I _____ "fifty"!
12. Last night I couldn't find my car keys. This morning I _____ them. They were still in the car!
13. "What was that?" "What?" "I thought I _____ a noise." "Don't worry, it was just the wind."
14. "Where is my English book?" "Did you lose it?" "No, I think somebody _____ it."
16. I didn't go to see "Star Wars." I _____ to see "Shine."
18. Today I finished writing a letter to my parents. I _____ three pages!



Word list

Use the past tense forms of:

buy	*go*	*speak*
do	*have*	*steal*
drive	*hear*	*take*
eat	*leave*	*think*
find	*say*	*walk*
finish	*see*	*write*
forget	*sell*	
get	*smoke*	

107

Tools & techniques:
A video chalkboard

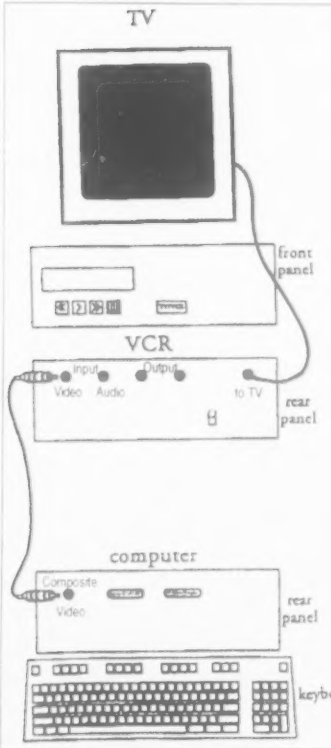
*By **Gerry Groff**, Penn State University, University Park, PA.*
Gerry is also the TESOL Video Interest Section chair. He says, "My primary interest is in finding ways to make effective use of affordable technology in the classroom."

Low cost, high tech

Here is a way to assemble a user-friendly, low-cost, multimedia, classroom teaching tool that can greatly enhance the way video is incorporated into instruction. It serves as an electronic 'chalkboard' where you can write and save class notes on computer. And it's a perfect compliment to the 'language experience approach' to teaching ESL.

This tool is made possible thanks to two underused features of your VCR, the "video input" jack and the "tv-video" (or "tv-av") switch. The "video-input" allows you to feed another video signal into your VCR in addition to the cable. In this case it will be the video signal from an old computer, such as the Apple II or an early IBM machine. The "tv-video" switch tells the VCR to send the signal from the "video input," instead of the one from the cable or the video tape, to the tv.

By connecting the computer to the VCR in this way, it is possible to "play" the computer through the VCR and show it on a television set. Since the normal size of computer generated text is too small to be seen from more than a few feet away, you will want to use a kind of large-font word processor made for visually impaired people. They produce large letters on the screen that can be seen from classroom distances.



How to set up a computer to play through a VCR:

1. Set the tv to channel 3 or 4 and set the VCR output selector (on the back of theVCR) to the same channel as the tv.
2. Plug one end of a cable with RCA type connectors into the "video input" jack of the VCR and the other end into the "composite video out" on the computer.
3. Turn on the tv, computer, and VCR. If computer screen does not appear on tv screen, change "tv/video" (sometimes tv/AV) switch setting. TV should now show the computer screen.
4. Play a video tape; video appears on the tv. Stop video tape; computer screen reappears. Text entered from the keyboard appears on the tv screen.

How to use it

Now, if there is a segment of video tape you want to use as a lesson, play the video as you normally would. The computer text screen disappears and the video picture takes its place. At the end of the video segment, stop the tape and the computer text screen reappears. Are there some pre-viewing vocabulary words you want to show? Type them in from the keyboard or call up the file containing them that you created previously. They appear on the same screen where the scenes they relate to just appeared. Or use the video segment as a "language experience" activity by asking students to narrate or describe the content of the segment they've just watched. As they describe, you transcribe.

When class is over everything that's been shown on your 'electronic blackboard' can be saved to a disk, printed out, copied, or reworked into the basis for the next lesson.

Big font word processors

For IBM-PC compatible I use a word processor called "BEdit" which I got from the Public Software Library, P.O. Box 35707, Houston, TX 77235-5705, Phone 713-524-6394.

For the Apple I use "Magic Slate" from Wings for Learning, 800-321-7511.

Here's a great way to make use of an old, 'dinosaur' computer!

Grammar grab-bag:
Pronouncing '-ED' endings

*by **Jack Bailey**, teacher at Santa Barbara Adult Education in Santa Barbara, California.*

A discovery approach

There are three ways to pronounce an '-ed' ending of simple past verbs— "t" as in *walked*, "d" as in *smiled* and "id" as in *wanted*. The problem for ESL students is knowing which pronunciation to use!

Fortunately, there is a simple rule and if your students try this activity they will discover the rule for themselves.

Who can benefit

This grammar activity is most useful for advanced beginners or intermediate students, but more advanced students can also benefit from the review.

Preparation

You'll need a set of 30 base verbs written on individual index cards for each group of 3 to 5 students. Choose 10 examples of each pronunciation type —10 "t", 10 "d" and 10 "id". (On the next page we've pre-printed some example verbs for you so that you can try this with your students without delay.) Mix the cards before beginning the activity.

You'll also need a set of category label cards for each group—three index cards marked "t", "d" and "-id".

How to do it

1. Students lay out all the verb cards on a flat surface for everyone in their group to see.
2. For each verb, students take turns pronouncing its past form.
3. Students then decide in which category to place the verb card (i.e., *play* in the past tense would be put under the "d" card category).
4. When students have finished their first pass, ask them to pronounce all the past forms again to double check.
5. After they have double checked, inform the group that they should find exactly 10 in each category. This should cause some rethinking.
6. When students have assigned 10 verbs to each sound category, you can then scan their card groupings for accuracy.
7. Inform them if an error exists.
8. When all 30 verbs have been labeled properly, ask the students to formulate reasons for each category. (Note: if they can't get it after a time and are becoming frustrated, direct their attention to the final sound of each verb—this should help them get it.)
9. Once a group can define the rules behind the pronunciation differences, be sure each person in the group is prepared to explain it to the other students if needed.

Why it works

Students enjoy this activity because it gives them a chance to solve a grammar puzzle by themselves. When they are finished, they have learned a rule they can apply every day.

Follow up—grammar

For lots of example sentences to fill-in-the-blanks, see Betty Azar's *Basic English Grammar* (1984 Prentice-Hall), page 123–126. You could do these exercises orally with the students.

Follow up—reading

News stories provide a natural way to get more practice using verbs in the past tense. You can bring in a newspaper clipping of a current news item for your students to discuss and retell.

Many ESL texts provide such news stories at a level your students can read. For example, try *True Stories in the News* by Sandra Heyer (1966 Addison Wesley/Longman).

Would your students enjoy a news story about a couple abducted by a UFO? See Chapter 3 in *Variations; Reading Skills/Oral Communication for Beginning Students of ESL* by Patricia Duffy (1986 Prentice-Hall). The author provides lots of exercises for grammar and vocabulary practice, as well as discussion.

Teaching notes:
wished
signed
visited

*The past -ed ending sounds like "t" when the base verb ends in a voiceless sound (like **wish**).*

*When the verb ends in a voiced sound (like **sign**) the -ed ending sounds like "d".*

*When the verb ends in a "t" or "d" sound (like **visit**), the -ed ending sounds like "id". This adds an additional syllable to the word.*

Let your students find this rule for themselves as they work on putting the verbs into the right categories.

Pronouncing '-ed' endings, *continued*

These verbs are all regular in the past tense, but the endings are pronounced slightly differently. Use these verb cards to help your students discover the pronunciation rule! (Mix the cards before starting.)

"t" sound	"d" sound	"id" sound
dance	smile	want
smoke	live	decide
laugh	sign	visit
stop	cry	start
help	answer	rent
ask	arrive	invite
work	study	need
finish	clean	attend
watch	call	wait
cook	stay	trust

Hints & tips

Fluency for advanced learners

In our last issue, we printed a request for help with conversation skills for advanced students. Diana Della Costa was kind enough to send us some information about an activity called "The Fluency Workshop" by Keith Maurice.

It is a very structured speaking activity, in which students prepare to speak on a specific topic (for example, describing your home) for four minutes. Students meet in pairs, and one student speaks while the other listens. The student who speaks then moves to another partner and repeats the speech, this time in only three minutes; then moves to another partner and repeats a third time, but in two minutes.

Following this partners exchange roles, so that the listeners have a chance to speak, also three times. The shrinking time helps students learn to become better at expressing themselves fluently.

For more details about this activity (and many others) see ***New Ways in Teaching Speaking*** by K.M. Bailey and L. Savage, eds. (1994 TESOL, phone 703-836-0774) ISBN 0-939791-54-5.

Kids' picture books for adults

Contributed by Priscilla Pease, Adult ESL, Binghamton, New York.

Children's books can provide wonderful, vocabulary-suggestive pictures for adult ESL students. In particular, my Level I students have enjoyed three books by author-illustrator Peter Spier, whose style appeals to all age groups.

Christmas! is a wordless portrayal of a family's Christmas-related activities from mid December through early January. Insights into American culture can be mixed with language activities.

Rain is a wordless account of a family's daily activities as influenced by weather changes. The illustrations are loaded with interesting detail. They encourage discussion of weather, gardens, family life. It's a good book for spring.

People celebrates the many differences between us while stressing the overall similarities from nose size to station of life. The basic vocabulary text can be used or not depending on students' level.

All three of these Peter Spier books can be purchased inexpensively in paper back (Bantam/Doubleday) at a bookstore with a children's department.

Tutor tip: A deck of cards

Contributed by Matthew J. Lamberti, Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council, Pittsburgh, PA.

If you always carry a deck of cards with you, you'll have a simple ESL teaching device! Playing cards are effective for many reasons: they're fun, they work with many different learning styles (visual, audio, tactile), they can be used in groups or one-to-one, and with all levels.

Numbers practice—Beginning students may need to learn the numbers, or learn to use them more fluently. For this, you can simply use the playing cards as you would flashcards. Teach the words ace, king, queen, jack, and try to break speed records for getting through the deck without errors. For longer numbers, put two, three or four cards together to practice how we say those numbers in English (for example, 4,792). If a student wants to master reading, or spelling, have him or her match the cards with the printed words on a page.

Games—Intermediate and advanced students may want to learn a popular American card game, or teach a card game that they play. When the directions and other communications are given in English, this can be a good vocabulary and listening comprehension exercise. Many slang words and phrases used, especially in poker games, may be taught.

I'm sure you may think of several other, better ideas for using cards. If so, please share them with us Using playing cards can provide a fun way to learn or review basic material, or take a break from the lesson while still practicising English. Have fun!

Do you have an ESL tip that works for you? Why not share it with our readers? Teachers and tutors are always looking for new ideas!

181

News & notes

Ucoming conferences

◆ April 4–5, 1997—**British Columbia TEAL** annual conference. Contact Nan Poliakoff, 604-294-8325.

◆ April 5, 1997—**Penn TESOL-East** annual conference in Collegeville, Pennsylvania. Contact Donna Sabella Monheit, 610-489-4111, ext 25281.

◆ April 12, 1997—**TexTESOL V** annual conference in Dallas, Texas. Contact Jean Conway, 972-860-4790.

◆ April 17–20, 1997—**California TESOL (CATESOL)** conference in Fresno, California. Contact Ellen Lipp, 209-278-4896.

◆ April 18, 1997—**Louisiana TESOL** annual conference in New Orleans, LA. Contact Jo Ann Robisheaux, email: jrobisheaux@selu.edu.

◆ April 18-19, 1997—**Georgia TESOL** annual conference in Carrollton, Georgia. Contace Diane Boothe 770-836-4437.

◆ April 24–26, 1997—**Arizona TESOL** conference in Yuma, Arizona. Contact Mary Jo Smith, 1406 Camino Real, Yuma, AZ 85464.

◆ April 20–22, 1997—**National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL)** annual conference in Louisville, Kentucky. Contact NCFL, 325 West Main St, Ste 200, Louisville, KY 40202-4251.

◆ June 11–14, 1997—**Laubach Literacy Action** biennial conference in Columbus, Ohio. Contact Janet Hiemstra, 315-422-9376, ext 283.

Update on hotel industry

In previous issues, readers have exchanged information about teaching ESL for hotel workers. We received a nice letter from Mary Casanova, Executive Director of LVA-Monroe County in K West, Florida. She tells us that an intensive training program for this purpose is being created with the help of a UWA/UPS Literacy Challenge Grant.

The new program is called "The Hospitality Program—English for Housekeepers" and will available later this year. If you are interested in finding out more, or have materials you'd like to share with them, contact Mary at 305-294-4352. In Florida, call 1-800-LVA-KEYS.

No free lunch

In our last issue, we offered our super-duper six-year index in exchange for a stamped envelope; unfortunately we found when we got it printed out that it's *much longer* than we thought (20 pages)! Oops. Which means we'll have to charge $2.50 to cover printing and mailing costs for those who request a copy. The index is a very useful tool for finding articles in past issues of *Hands-on English*.

Online opportunities

by Meg Gam, ESL teacher in New York City.

Dave's ESL Cafe

Dave's ESL Cafe just grows and grows. It is a great one-stop shop for students looking for interesting ESL/EFL practice activities on the Internet, as well as for teachers looking for inspiration (or jobs!).

This huge website has a number of interesting pages, including the ESL Discussion Center, an idiom page, a quote page, a help center where students can write questions to be answered by an ESL teacher, a quiz page, a phrasal verb page, links for students and teachers, teacher and student email connections and a job center.

If you pay for your Internet connection by the hour, be sure to set a clock or timer by your computer when you go to the ESL Cafe. . .there is just so much to see and do there!

Here's the address: http://www.pacificnet.net/~sperling/eslcafe.html

Happy browsing!

Classified ads

You can place a text ad in ***Hands-on English*** *for $10 an issue. Ads must be 30 words or less.*

Publications

Nobel Prize Winners by Lisa F. DeWitt. A collection of 20 biographies of laureates from many countries. Use as a reader or as listening activity for intermediate level. Student exercises included. Text $12.50 (ISBN 0-86647-047-6), 3 cassette tapes $27 (ISBN 0-86647-049-2). ***Pro Lingua Associates. 800-366-4775.***

Hands-on, the index. A six-year index of past *Hands-on English* articles is now available for $2.50 per copy. A useful tool for finding the articles you need! 20pp. (See page 2 of this issue for ordering information.)

Oops—we goofed!

In our last issue we misquoted the price of a Pro Lingua book, **Conversation Inspirations**. The real price is $12.50, and well worth it!

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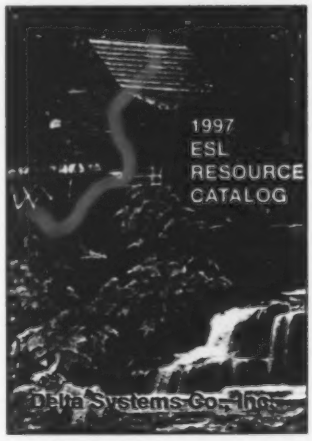

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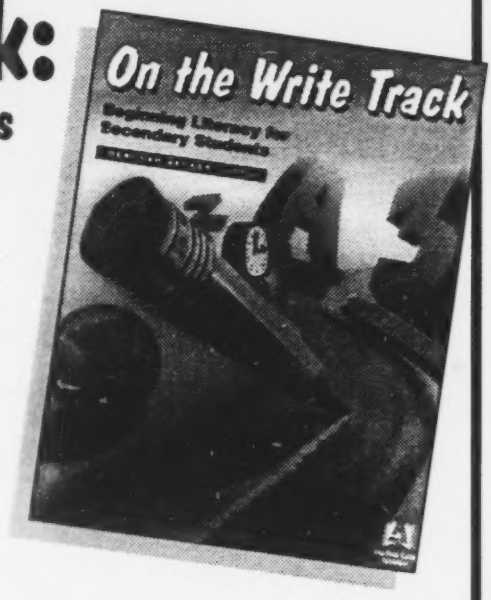

Written by Deborah Becker Cotto
Edited by Sharron Bassano

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Contents:

Letters 3

Writing activity: Class-to-class writing exchange 4

Idea file: Student-to-student letter exchange 6

Vocabulary: Talking about the weather 7

Multi-level cross-word puzzle: About reading 8

Word search puzzle: About reading 10

Conversation: "Tell me more about it!" 11

Minigrant report '96 Kids and computers 12

News & notes 13

Hints & tips 16

Editorial:

The student as king?

When we were in graduate school, our Methods professor told us about a famous language teacher who assigned all of his students important roles to play during the duration of their language course. For example, King of Sweden or Prime Minister of England. The students did all of their lessons and learning activities in these roles.

We were fascinated with this idea, imagining how the teacher would correct errors, for example—"Can you put that in the past tense, Mr. Prime Minister?" Or, "Very good, Your Highness—much better than last time."

The idea behind this, its seems, was to give students dignified, even grand roles which raised their status and gave them more confidence. Their tone of voice would be firmer, their posture more assertive. (Can you imagine how *your* shoulders would straighten if you knew you were King of Sweden??)

Feeling like a baby

We're not quite sure in practice in the classroom how this technique would work, but in theory it's wonderful. Learning a new language is embarrassing for an adult—making mistakes in front of peers, not knowing things, not being in control, not seeming competent. Role-playing can be beneficial by giving students a chance to practice self-confidence in the new language.

We've given you a small example of this to try with your students in the conversation activity, "That's interesting—tell me more!" on page 11. We hope your students have fun with it, and feel proud telling people, for example, that their father-in-law was the first man on the moon. Wouldn't you be proud? This is one example of how to lend dignity to your students.

Who I really am

Aside from role-playing, teachers need to find many ways for students to share their experiences, skills and talents in order that others know who they are. Writing activities, for example, sometimes give an opportunity for students to express themselves in ways they can't orally.

We had a vivid example of this in an older Russian student we were tutoring in a small group. Although he knew some English, he had a hard time expressing himself at all, and was not able to understand what the other students were saying. As a result, we thought he seemed discouraged and withdrawn.

One day we worked with him individually, and using the "language experience" technique wrote his story while he described the house that he and his son had recently remodelled themselves. It seems he knew how to repair almost anything, for when it was done it was quite a story. During that lesson he learned a lot of vocabulary, and we learned some useful things about laying carpet.

The next session he proudly shared his story with the other students, who were amazed at what he had accomplished, and had lots of questions to ask him.

Now he was someone we could all look up to.

Hands-on **English**

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About the publication

Hands-on English has been helping teachers and tutors with practical teaching ideas since 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who taught ESL to adults in many different settings, and is familiar with the fun and the challenges involved.

Our articles and ideas are contributed by experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have an article or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

Who reads H.O.E.?

We thought you might be interested to know what a wide range our readership covers. We have subscribers working with ESL students in:

Refugee programs
Literacy programs
Community colleges
Colleges and universities
Correctional facilities
Resource centers
Adult Education programs
Volunteer tutoring
Intensive ESL programs
Teacher training programs
Religious organizations
Community Education programs
Secondary schools
Workplace education
Language institutes
Libraries . . . .and more!

What do our readers have in common? They are dedicated, they are working under sometimes difficult conditions, and they are looking for practical, adult materials that will help their students learn English.

About our Minigrants program

Hands-on English awards a few small grants (of up to $200 each) annually for practical classroom projects. Applications are due each April 30, and are available upon request.

Please send me a subscription to *Hands-on English* for one year (6 issues).
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(Permission to photocopy for teacher's own students)

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(Permission to copy for multiple teachers/tutors)

_____ Postage/handling: None to US addresses.
Canada/Mexico add $4.
Countries outside N. America add $10.

Name:_____
✓ Mail to my ❍ home/ ❍ work

Address:_____

_____

_____

✓ Check one: New subscription Renewal

7-1

Letters

We love hearing from our readers!

Conversation resource

"I am writing in response to the letter to the editor from Alden F. Jacobs in the March/April 1997 issue [asking for ideas to help an advanced student improve his speaking].

"For over a year I tutored a GE executive from Japan. His grammar was great but his conversational English needed work. We used a book called *The Idiom Advantage* by Dana Watkins. It's from Addison-Wesley and the ISBN is 0-201-82527-9.

"This book prompted a lot of everyday-type conversation, something these type of learners seem to really need. I would recommend it to Mr. Jacobs. Good luck!"

—Cindy Haven
Pittsfield, MA

Editor's note: The book is also available from Delta Systems Co., 1-800-323-8270. The text is $14 and the cassette is $20.

Largest ESL class in history

"I've used your puzzles. Students like them very well. I teach level one—about 15 students, and level three—35 students. It just seems like thirty-five hundred."

—Rose Mary Fahey
Elmwood Park, IL

Your copying fees must be enormous!

Send more games

"Keep up the good work. As a substitute ESL teacher I'm sometimes in situations for which I'm not adequately prepared. Your material has provided me with much needed 'back-up.'

"I'd like more game suggestions—or simple activities to end an evening class when the students look so very tired."

—Evelyn Glazebrook
Des Moines, IA

Simple activities can still provide very good language practice! Maybe this is because students learn better when they relax a bit. Any good ideas out there you can share with us? Thanks!

A reader comments

"None of the expensive slick new publications can come close to your excellent publication. I use its ideas constantly."

—Ann Dempsey
Del Mar, CA

OK, we'll take that as a compliment. By the way. . .what's the opposite of 'slick?'

Needs intro computer resource

"Could you please ask your readers what they do to teach computer literacy to ESOL adults? Thus far, I have not seen any books on the subject. Many schools are offering programs for ESOL adults on computers; but the student needs to what a keyboard is, that it is not in ABC order, and where it plugs into the computer. Thanks!"

—Diana E. Della Costa
Kissimmee, FL

We've heard very good things from teachers about a book called "Keystrokes to Literacy, Using Computers as Learning Tools for Adult Beginning Readers" by Antonia Stone (National Textbook Co.) ISBN 0-8442-06792. The book is $23.95. Call NTC at 1-800-323-4900.

Other recommendations are welcome!

Discussing immigration with students

A reader writes to tell us she asked her students this question: How does the government of your country handle illegal immigration? She reports:

"In groups of three, the students told their classmates what their government did about both legal and illegal immigration. Some countries had no problems—one student said that 'no one wants to come to Eretria.' Again, as a class, we discussed how other countries viewed immigrants.

For many students, the discussion revealed that the problems in the United States arise simply because so many people want to come here.

—Mary Lu Leon
San Leandro, CA

It would be interesting to hear from other teachers about what their students are saying and learning regarding issues of immigration.

Writing activity:
Class-to-class writing exchange

We were delighted to "meet" Lance Jackson on the Internet, and hear about his experiment with two of his writing classes exchanging letters with each other.

Although he is still developing this syllabus and improving the project for next time, Lance agreed to share a description with us of what his classes did for the 10-week project. We think his experience will give you lots of ideas you can try with your own students! –Editor.

Two classes interact

For ten weeks I taught two pre-intermediate reading and writing classes. One was on Wednesday morning and the other was on Friday morning. I was thus able to use material generated by one class for the other class. I could also develop material from one of the classes' speaking segment which I also taught on Thursday afternoons.

During the first five weeks students in each class wrote paragraphs and incorporated them into a letter sent to a student in the other class. The paragraphs were mostly based on topics from the reading text for the week. These texts had been selected by the teacher from authentic sources (such as newspaper articles). In some cases they were simplified, but generally they were of a complex linguistic level. The letter writing gave the students a way of dealing with the complexity of these texts and of responding to them. They helped, for example, to preview a topic, or to simplify it, or to relate it to one's own experiences.

Letters from and to the teacher were used in week 1 to help create rapport while in week 5 they were used for evaluative purposes. Following is a summary of the syllabus I created during the ten weeks I tried this.

Week 1:

Class A: Students received letters from the teacher and wrote replies.

Class B: Each student wrote a paragraph of personal description based on an interview with a classmate. Then they incorporated the paragraph into a letter to a person in Class A.

(Note: It would be best here to get a list of names and keep students to the same pen pal. However, due to absentees at different times you may have to do some offsetting and adjusting during the course.)

Week 2:

A: Students read B's letters and wrote replies.

B: Students read A's letters. They then read the teacher-selected reading material (a description of a room), and wrote a paragraph about it to incorporate into a letter to A.

Week 3:

A: Students read B's letters and room descriptions as a pre-reading activity. Then they read the same text that the other class had read, and wrote a similar letter as a reply to A.

B: During speaking class they interviewed some Advanced level students about language learning strategies. They followed up by writing a paragraph describing the interview and the language learning suggestions. Then, they read A's letter and incorporated their new paragraph into the reply.

Week 4:

A: The students read B's letter about the teacher-selected text they were to read. They used the information gleaned from the letter as a preview activity before reading the teacher-selected text. Then they wrote a reply to B's letter, incorporating additional language learning information they got from the reading.

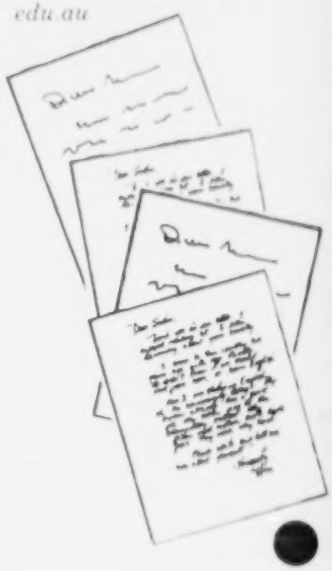
B: Students read A's reply, and used the information gleaned from the letter about language learning strategies as a preview activity to reading the teacher-selected text. Next, they wrote a description of the imaginary country they had created during a speaking activity that week, and incorporated it into a letter to A.

Week 5:

A: Students read the letters with imaginary country descriptions, then wrote similar letters in reply. They also read a letter from the teacher and wrote a reply.

B: As for A.

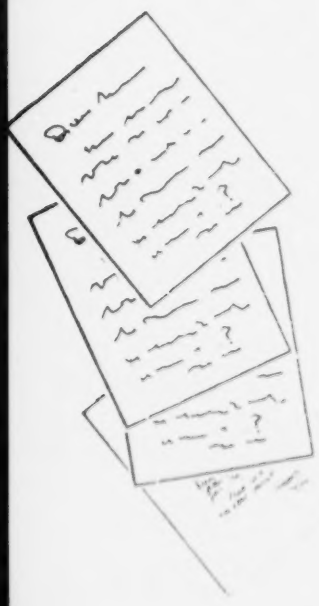
–by ***Lance Jackson****, ICTE, University of Queensland, Australia. Email: lance@lingua.cltr.uq.edu.au*



Week 6:
A: Mid-session Tests.
B: As for A.

Week 7:
A: Self-assessed tests. Students read the teacher-selected text (narrative) and drew pictures of the text as a comprehension exercise.
B: Self-assessed tests. The students matched A's pictures to the appropriate parts of the text. In groups they composed a short story based on lines of the teacher-selected text.
(The teacher typed two versions of the group compositions—one in original form, the other in corrected or improved form.)

Week 8:
A: Students read the two versions of the short story and found the differences. They isolated 2 or 3 main areas of difference. Then, they wrote questions about the texts, wrote alternative endings, drew pictures of text, etc. In groups, the students wrote similar stories using single word prompts for each member to derive a sentence, then all members connected these into a unified text.
(The teacher typed two versions of the group compositions—as for B above.)
B: The students read and compared the two versions of their compositions from the previous week. Answered A's questions and developed/completed the composition. They read A's original versions of compositions and suggested improvements. Then they wrote questions about A's texts.



Week 9:
A: The students compared the original and improved versions. Discussed grammar issues arising from texts using an overhead transparency. In groups, they wrote poems translated from their native language. Groups and individuals wrote poems during an excursion through the university rain forest.
B: Students read A's poems and did various activities with them (pictures, questions, improving grammar, discussion). Then, they wrote their own poems about the rain forest excursion.
(The teacher compiled all the poems and short stories from both classes into a booklet.)

Week 10:
A: Exit tests.
B: During speaking class they met Class A. Groups composed of students (old pen pals) from each class did a university discussion hunt together. All the students took a copy of the booklet of poems and stories for a keepsake.

Additional Comments:

In their response letter to the teacher in week 5, many students said they didn't like the teacher's control of the topic for letter writing. Some of these students suggested using the letter writing idea as a fluency exercise done for homework, corrected by the teacher, with class time used for discussion of major ways of improving the writing quality. A second draft could be written for homework and then sent to their pen-pal.

Collecting and 'mailing' the letters and coordinating the drafts requires the teacher to be constantly attentive to student motivation. When using the letters as materials for the second class, students in the first class need to have the final drafts in beforehand. Once the students realized the importance of doing this most managed to get their drafts in without prompting.

The typing of students' creative writing in the second half of the course can be done by administrative personnel (if you have them, and if you smile nicely!).

In future variations of this course, I will be working on ways to allow more cohesive interaction between the two classes, and to develop the interaction between students and teacher.

Why it works

Writing is always easier when the purpose for it of it is clear, and communicating with another student by letter is a good incentive to work on writing skills. An additional incentive for the students to work on their writing, though, is that their letters provide the basis for the lesson in the other class—thus they are responsible for keeping the course going!

Idea file:
Student-to-student letter exchange

(This is an adaptation of Lance Jackson's "Class-to-class writing exchange" on pages 4–5 of this issue.)

Here is a way for you to try the letter exchange technique within one class, or with just one group of students.

This will work not only with advanced students, but even with a low intermediate group if you choose appropriate topics for the students. Accuracy and spelling are not too important in this exercise, as you can assist the students while they write and read the letters.

Start with a question

Based on issues your students have been reading about and discussing in class, develop two or three opinion questions. For example: "Do you think nuclear energy is safe?" Or, "Do you think jury trials should be televised?"

Have the students each select a question they would most like to give their opinion about, and then draw names so each student has the name of someone to whom to address a letter.

Have the students write a few sentences on their topic, beginning "I think nuclear energy is safe because. . ." You can model this on the board, and you may want to set a time limit such as 10 to 15 minutes or so.

Response and query

When students are ready, have them exchange letters. Tell them to read the letter (you can help, if necessary) and respond in two ways—first, by agreeing or disagreeing (for example, "I agree with you about this because. . ."). Second, they must write a question for their pen pal to answer. This question might be for clarification (i.e., "What do you mean by. . .?") or about the content (i.e., "Why do you think that. . .?")

Try to do at least two or three exchanges within one class period, so you can monitor the responses and make sure the students understand each other's letters. More exchanges can continue as homework, if appropriate. You can continue the same "thread" of discussion as long as interest is high.

Follow-up writing

Once the students are finished exchanging letters, have each student return to his or her original question and re-read the entire exchange as review. Now ask each student to write a new essay on this question, to be handed in to the teacher.

Because the students have hashed through the issues already, they should be in a good position to make a stronger argument and a more interesting essay than if they were starting 'cold.'

Why it works

There is something about the teacher being 'out of the loop' that really makes this activity click. Students seem to enjoy the interaction that develops. You can satisfy their need for grammar correction later, if you follow up with a more formal writing assignment.

Best uses

You can use this activity as a quick, brainstorming type introduction to a reading topic, or as review of reading and discussion activities the students have already done. In either case, it is best to keep the letter exchanges moving fairly rapidly—the focus should be on communication, not on carefulness of writing.

Letter exchange

Purpose:	Pre-reading or review; writing fluency; student interaction.
Level:	Adaptable; also multi-level.
Time:	Usually one class period.
Materials:	None. Have some issue questions ready.

Keep this idea handy, for those times when you need a writing communication activity in a hurry! It's adaptable to many different situations and student levels.

Vocabulary:
Talking about the weather

*Two teachers contributed to this article—**Rae Roberts** of Cleveland Heights, Ohio and **Bobbie Anderson** of Topeka, Kansas.*

Adapting for beginners

Rae Roberts likes to use 'authentic materials' even with her beginning students. Authentic materials can be newspaper articles, diagrams, TV segments—anything that native speakers would see.

You would think such material would be too hard for beginning ESL students, but if you present it carefully, they can learn a lot from it, and learn about the news they are seeing and hearing every day at the same time.

Weather forecasts

Rae suggests that you can use the weather map in the newspaper and a short video of a TV weather forecast to make some lessons that will help students learn to use these tools. Here are some of her ideas:

1. Introduce the weather vocabulary by looking at the "key" of weather words on the weather map (usually a daily paper carries a national weather map).
2. They can practice this vocabulary by talking about the map (i.e., "There is snow in St. Louis") and matching the words with the symbols.
3. They can practice "warmer" and "colder" by looking at the temperatures in the 5-day forecast.
4. By studying the list of foreign cities and their weather data, students can "report" on the weather in their own countries.
5. Show the students a video tape of a national TV weather forecast. Have students talk about the weather in various parts of the country by looking at a "still" of the weather map in the video. Students can make weather predictions based on the patterns they see.
6. Show a video segment of a five-day forecast from a local weather report. These are usually very fast, so have students try to write one weather word for each day as they listen.
7. For homework the students can call the weather phone recording and write the temperature for the next day and two weather words that they hear.

"It's a beautiful day today!"

Bobbie Anderson uses some pictures she drew herself to teach beginning students to talk about the weather.

It's cloudy. It's a cloudy day.

It's partly cloudy. It's a _____ _____ day.

It's sunny. It's a _____ day.
It's clear. The sky is clear.
It's a _____ day.

It's rainy. It's a _____ day.

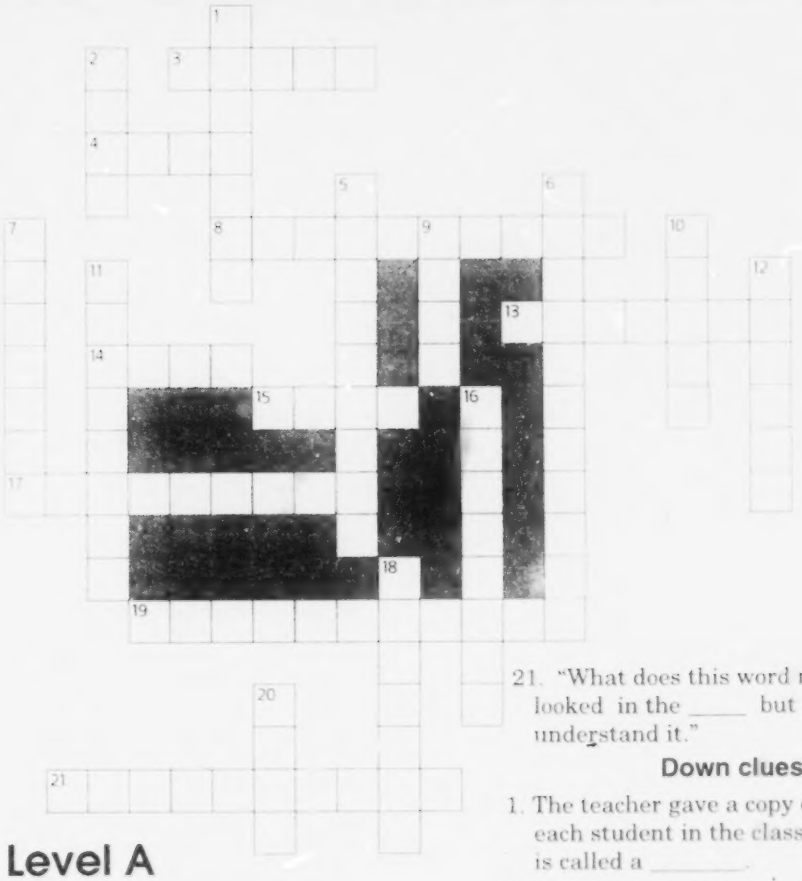
It's windy. It's _____ _____ day.

It's calm. It's not windy.
It's _____ _____ day.

It's stormy.
_____ _____ _____.

Multi-level crossword puzzle:

About reading



Word list:

alphabet
book
dictionary
email
handwriting
handout
interesting
label
letters
letter
library
magazine
message
newspaper
page
read
scan
sign
subscribe
understand
word

Level A

Across clues

3. The _____ on the bottle says, "Take this medicine four times daily."
4. I'm sorry, I can't _____ your handwriting. What does this say?
8. Can you help me? I don't _____ this word.
13. I have a _____ for you from your husband. He says to call him at home.
14. Please write your name at the top of the _____.
15. The teacher asked us to ____ the story quickly to find the names of the people in it.
17. For a few dollars a month you can _____ to your city's newspaper. You will receive it every day at home.
19. "I can't read this. What does it say?" "Oh, sorry—my _____ is hard to read. I'll write it again."
21. "What does this word mean? I looked in the _____ but I still don't understand it."

Down clues

1. The teacher gave a copy of a story to each student in the class. This paper is called a _____.
2. Please tell me how to spell the _____ "government."
5. You can read about garage sales this weekend if you look in the _____.
6. I like this book. It is very _____.
7. The first three _____ of the alphabet are A, B and C.
9. Did you see that _____? It said "No left turn."
10. You can send a message to a friend with a computer. This is called _____.
11. There are 26 letters in the _____.
12. I got a _____ from my cousin in Vietnam. She had a new baby last month.
16. Last week I had to wait at the doctor's office. I read a _____ about fishing, with many beautiful pictures.
18. "Did you buy that book?" "No, I borrowed it from the _____."
20. I would like to read this _____. Maybe they have it at the library.

Level B

Across clues

3. Medicine bottles usually have important information on the _____.
4. Please print carefully so that everyone can _____ it.
8. I looked up this word in the dictionary, but I still don't _____ it.
13. Please give this _____ to your teacher. She had an important phone call this morning.
14. There is a map of my country on _____ 107 of this book.
15. Before you read a story, it's a good idea to _____ it quickly first.
17. This magazine is very interesting. How much does it cost to _____?
19. When you write a dictation, please make sure your _____ is clear so the teacher can read it.
21. Can I borrow your _____? I need to look up a word.

Down clues

1. I was absent from class yesterday, so I didn't get the _____. Do you have an extra copy?
2. I know what this thing is, but I don't know the _____ in English.
5. The *New York Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and the *Los Angeles Times* are all examples of a _____.
6. I read an _____ article about comets in the newspaper today. I liked reading it.
7. How many _____ are there in the word "newspaper"?
9. Before you take your driver's test, you have to learn to read every traffic _____.
10. I sent a message to my cousin in Canada yesterday by _____. I'm sure he got it today if he checked his computer.
11. One of the first things you learn in a new language is the _____.
12. If you want to tell the President your opinion about an issue, you can write him a _____.
16. *Time*, *Newsweek* and *National Geographic* are all examples of a _____.
18. If you fill out a form and show some i.d., you can get a _____ card to check out books.
20. "Would you like to borrow a _____?" "Yes, but I forgot my library card."

Level C

Across clues

3. Instructions on the front of a bottle.
4. To _____ aloud means look at the words and say them out loud for others to hear.
8. I know what this means; I _____.
13. A note to you.
14. Part of a book.
15. Read quickly to find information.
17. Buy a newspaper or magazine for one year.
19. Everybody's _____ is different. Is yours easy to read, or difficult?
21. A book you can use to find information about words.

Down clues

1. A paper from the teacher.
2. Part of a sentence.
5. This is usually published daily.
6. Opposite of boring.
7. Parts of the alphabet.
9. A _____ has instructions for drivers.
10. A message sent by computer.
11. All the letters as a group are called the _____.
12. Something in writing you receive by mail.
16. This is usually published weekly or monthly.
18. A place to find books, magazines, tapes and videos.
20. Something to read with many pages.

Note to the instructor:

Your students can select which level they would like to try for this puzzle: easier (A), a little harder (B), or challenging (C).

They can also elect to use the list of words as an aid, or not.

Many students like to try all three levels, so have extra copies of the clues ready!

Word search puzzle:
About reading

B O N F M E S S A G E S D I Z D A V S Y Z Q D N
V F L C B G J I Q K A I F L F W L M H Q S C A N
P E Q U U B U L E T T E R F G X A R P U M X L E
H S O B C Y H R P Q R U A E R U A L A B E L P N
J K V S Y E M N M B E W W Y Z G M Y M W Y L M K
N Q O A O P O U N D E R S T A N D K W N L I D I
J E E N N U V L I N Z T R E A D H A N D O U T R
I I N T E R E S T I N G V O P G T K C I J J I E
M B X D T Y S J L A B W B K N E W S P A P E R O
H I M A L I B R A R Y Z R F S J W E C R F C U Q
Y U K F J E M A I L C B O O K W O N O H P N O F
C X A H L C N L C L Q J Q F W L Y Q J X R O X Z
C M V F T Q L L M B W O R D S K T C M X D L K H
N E V L E T T E R S L Y M E Q B N G L B L O N K
L R R K G H Q I S U Y H N D K O X S R K F Q Q H
J S Y V P L E Z Z Z Q D C Y T W I A E Q B F G Y
A M I X J U G Y K L W T I N U N U C J S Z M M R
W P B U Q S C S U B S C R I B E Z C N X E N X E
S Z H D I C T I O N A R Y P W L M N V I W I T M
H O P A G E I R W C I F Y W P S I G N R X W C U
Z V X G T E J C B X R E H A N D W R I T I N G S
B A K P P D O E D G C W Y G H W X U K I W H R E
L C Z S R N A W A Q Y N A L P H A B E T U K V Q
Q U C E O L T M A G A Z I N E D F Q P S O E D X

ALPHABET
SUBSCRIBE
NEWSPAPER
LETTER
EMAIL
HANDOUT
HANDWRITING
INTERESTING
BOOK
UNDERSTAND
PAGE
LETTERS
LIBRARY
MAGAZINE
MESSAGE
LABEL
DICTIONARY
WORD
READ
SCAN
SIGN

Note to the instructor:

The words in this puzzle are the same as the ones in the crossword puzzle in this issue (pages 8–9). This word search is designed to be non-frustrating, so all of the words run left to right (none are diagonal or backwards).

Let us know how you and your students like this style of puzzle, so we can decide whether to publish more of them. Thank you! —Editor

Conversation activity:

"That's interesting—tell me more!"

Giving encouraging responses

Here's a fun speaking activity that will give your students a chance to do a little role-playing while practicing some responses that native speakers use all the time.

First, explain that when someone tells you something interesting, there are many ways to respond that will help to continue the conversation. These responses are especially helpful when you are meeting someone for the first time.

Teach the students how to say the response phrases with the proper, encouraging intonation. Students may have their own phrases to add to the list, or if you know of a similar expression that's commonly used in your region, you could include it as well.

Next, explain that each student will get a role card with information about themselves. Have students draw from the role cards (below), and make sure the students understand their cards. You may want to add some cards that reflect your students' background knowledge.

Then, present this dialog as a sample conversation:

Student 1—Hi, my name is Albert.
Student 2—Hi, Albert, I'm Sue. Nice to meet you.
S1—Nice to meet you, too.
S2—Tell me something about yourself.
S1—Well, I used to be a newspaper reporter.
S2—That's interesting!
S1—Yes, I worked for the *New York Times* for six years. I also received the Pulitzer Prize.
S2—I didn't know that! *(Etc.)*

Have the students assume their roles and begin some conversations in pairs. You can do this in the milling-around-the-room 'party style', or in a more orderly 'reception style' as you prefer.

Responses:

Oh, really?
I didn't know that.
How interesting!
Hmm! (falling intonation)
I'm surprised to hear that.
Tell me more about it.

I met the Queen of England when I was 10 years old.	Two years ago I was on TV, on the David Letterman show.	My sister is an opera singer in Germany.
My father-in-law was the first man on the moon.	I used to be a newspaper reporter.	I've been invited by President Clinton to visit the White House next week.
I played chess once with Garry Kasparov.	I have written 3 books about American history.	My father is a doctor. He's a heart-transplant specialist.
I live in the same house where Olympic ice-skater Nancy Kerrigan used to live.	I have 50 tropical fish in my apartment.	I am the President of a large computer company.

Minigrants award winner '96:
A field experience with kids and computers

Joy Egbert found that her Intensive English Program students at Indiana University were usually stuck in the classroom, and rarely got a chance to interact with the community. She also noticed that elementary school students in her community rarely got to meet someone from another culture.

So, she brought the two groups together—Indiana University (IU) students from at least three countries, and second and third graders in a local school. In collaboration with one of the elementary teachers, Joy put together a project that would involve both groups working with computers.

Most of the IU students were planning to become teachers, so they were eager (if a little apprehensive) to meet the kids, try some teaching, and learn about the school. They worked in pairs, meeting with small groups of the elementary students. They introduced themselves and showed the kids a slide show (made with Kid Pix software) they had prepared, called "All About Me."

Then, they helped the kids to prepare a presentation of their own by teaching them how to use the computer and the Kid Pix program. During the course they also communicated with the students and their teacher by email.

The result of the project was a cross cultural exchange that went both ways. The IU students practiced their English, learned some conversational English and slang from the kids, and found out more about the U.S. schools. They also learned something about themselves through the teaching process.

The elementary kids got to meet someone from another country. They learned what they shared in common, as well as something about the other cultures. They also learned some new computer skills and gained satisfaction from the computer project they completed.

Award winner:
***Joy Egbert**, Center for English Language Training (CELT) at Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana*

Joy has an interesting web site with lots of resources on English Language Education. You can visit the site at: http://www.ezinfo.ucs.indiana.edu/~jegbert/esl.html

Some of the Indiana University students as they prepare to meet some elementary students in a cross cultural exchange.

About the Minigrants

Hands-on English offers several small grants each year for language teaching projects. We hope to announce the 1997 awardees in our July/August issue.

Applications for next year's awards will become available in January 1998.

News & notes

Ucoming conferences

◆ June 27–29, 1997—**TESOL Academy** workshops in Baltimore, Maryland. Contact TESOL, Phone: 703-836-0774 or Email: academy@tesol.edu

◆ July 25–27, 1997—**TESOL Academy** workshops in Seattle, Washington. Contact TESOL, Phone: 703-836-0774 or Email: academy@tesol.edu

Don't pack those bags yet!

In our last issue, we mistakenly told you that the ***Laubach Literacy Action*** *Biennial conference would be in June of this year. Sorry—the correct date is June 11-14, 1998! (Hmm. . .maybe that's why they call it 'biennial'??) The prize for catching this error goes to our first caller, Lois Poppe of the Lincoln Literacy Center in Lincoln, Nebraska.Thanks!*

◆ June 11–14, 1998—**Laubach Literacy Action** biennial conference in Columbus, Ohio. Contact Janet Hiemstra, LLA, Box 131, Syracuse, NY, 13210. Phone 315-422-9376, ext 283.

More on citizenship

We received lots of comments from readers that the article on teaching citizenship we printed in our March/April issue was useful. We will try to keep you up to date, as more resources are quickly becoming available.

Citizenship Alert! available

The Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC) has received a grant from From the Emma Lazarus Fund to provide support for people wishing to become U.S. citizens. Teachers and persons working with seniors and the disabled, or with ESL/Citizenship students can receive a free subscription to their publication, 'Citizenship Alert!' This promises to bring periodic notices about materials and technical assistance.

To get on this mailing list, send your name, occupation, the name of your organization, address, phone, fax, and email to: Martha Garcia, ILRC, 1663 Mission St #602, San Francisco, CA 94103. Or fax to: 415-255-9792. Also, explain in your message who you provide services for (seniors, persons with disabilities, or ESL/Citizenship students).

Advocacy group's Website

The National Immigration Forum, an advocacy group on immigration issues has a beautiful and informative website that is worth a visit or two. Don't miss their links to other sites, which connect you to many other U.S. organizations that are working for immigrants. http://www.immigrationforum.org/index.htm

Free bibliographies

You can receive two "Minibibs" or annotated bibliographies that are useful: "Citizenship Education for Immigrants" and "Citizenship Curricula for Immigrants." These are available from: NCLE (National Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education), 1118 22nd St NW, Washington, DC 20037 or call 202-9292, ext 200. Both these Minibibs were published last year; there may be updates from NCLE soon.

You can also visit NCLE on the web, at http://www.cal.org/ncle and see their list of publications there.

Citizenship questions online

The Washington Post web page has avery interesting article about citizenship testing, that includes a list of the questions. with answers. Try: http://washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/daily/nov/18/citizen.htm

CNN provides news stories and teaching resources

For your advanced students, CNN San Francisco (in collaboration with the California Distance Learning Project) has a web site on using CNN news stories for educational purposes.

This material isn't designed specifically for ESL, but if you have more advanced students you might find it useful. A news story is provided both in its full form and in an edited version, with lots of vocabulary and comprehension exercises.

Try http://www.cnnsf.com/ which gets you to the home page, then look for the "Interactive Learning Resources" box.

Feeling left out?
If you aren't connected to the Internet but want to check out the resources there, find a public library with online services and ask a librarian to help you. Librarians are the second-most wonderful people in the world (after ESL teachers, of course).

Classified ads

You can place a text ad in ***Hands-on English*** *for $10 an issue. Ads must be 30 words or less.*

Publications

New!
Solo, Duo, Trio—Puzzles and Games for Building English Language Skills by Richard Yorkey (Pro Lingua Associates). 128 paper and pencil puzzles for individuals, pairs, or small groups. Short, useful activities. Photocopyable. $23 (ISBN 0-86647-091-3)
Pro Lingua Associates 800-366-4775.

Get the ***Hands-on English*** **six year index!** Our index of articles for all of the past issues throughApril 1997 is finally ready and available for $2.50 per copy (20 pages). Contact the *Hands-on English* office if you would like to have this useful tool.

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Now–New Ways to Reach Adults!

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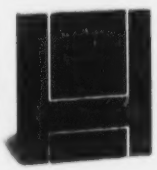
Donna M. Brinton and Peter Master, Editors



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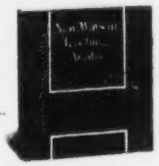
1997, 8" x 8", 312 pp., ISBN 0-939791-67-6, US $23.95 ($22.95 members)

New Ways in Teaching Adults

Marilyn Lewis, Editor



Whether your adult learners are trying to decipher answering machine messages, comprehend radio or newspapers, or speak to their bosses, *New Ways in Teaching Adults* will offer fresh and effective activities to elicit communication and spur language learning.

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Hints & tips

Names of countries

Mary Lu Leon writes to us about a successful activity she tried with her students, in which they got to hear the names of countries in other languages.

First, they listed the English names of all the countries from which the students came: China, Vietnam, Korea, Venezuela, Hungary, etc. Then, in groups of three, she asked them to tell their classmates the names of these countries in their first language.

Finally, as a class, they wrote these names on the board. It was fascinating to hear how the United States sounded in French, Amharic, and Hungarian. It was a lively class, and the students were interested to hear how the names sounded.

Describe-and-draw

Janet Hunerdosse has used a magazine picture game with her intermediate level conversation class. She says the students usually like this.

She first cuts out advertisements from magazines that have simple designs, such as a vase of flowers. The students work in pairs—one student describes the picture to the other student who must draw it, without being able to see it.

When they are done the students pass the pictures and drawings around the room so they can see each other's "work."

Rhymes and poems

Meg Gam plays a word game with her students in which they practice rhyming and then make a poem. First, she writes letters of the alphabet on the blackboard. Then, she gives the students a word such as "blue," and asks them to think of words that rhyme. As they name new words, such as "you," she writes them on the board next to the letter of the alphabet they start with.

When the students have named as many rhyming words as they can, they then get into small groups and try to write a poem using words from the list on the board. Here's a silly example:

"He has a shoe
And I have one, too.
This is true.
What about you?"

When the students are finished composing their poems, have each group read its poem aloud to the class.

Do you have an ESL tip that works for you? Why not share it with our readers? Teachers and tutors are always looking for new ideas!

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Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

Contents:

Letters 3

Conversation: (Another) conversation wheel 4

On the market: Where to get ESL catalogs 6

Multi-level crossword puzzle: Reading & writing numbers 8

Pronunciation: "Did you say 30 or 13?" 10

Tools & techniques: A numbers dictation and puzzle 11

Grammar grab-bag: Comparing prices with 'less than' and 'more than' 12

Hints & tips 13

News & notes 14

Online opportunities 14

Editorial:
Getting off to a good start

Many of our readers are teaching or tutoring this summer, and we hope those people will find the activities in this issue useful for their students.

For those of you taking some well-deserved time off, though, now is the time to start planning ahead for your fall courses. So we hope that the list of publishers we're including in this issue will help you if you're looking for materials.

Ideas for a new beginning

We thought that if you're looking forward to new classes in the fall, you might be interested in some advice in getting started in the best possible way. Well, we just *love* giving advice, so here goes:

1. **Make sure you learn every student's name** immediately (in the first session or two). Use any tricks you need to to do this—nametags, memory games in class, photographs, student lists, visualization techniques—whatever works. This helps every student to feel welcome and a part of the class. It also demonstrates that you take your job seriously.
2. **Make sure the students learn each others' names** as soon as possible. There are many games and interactive exercises you can try to accomplish this.
3. **Make time to interview each student individually**, even for just a few minutes, and even if you have a large class. Listen to what the student says and take notes. The rapport you build with this simple technique is invaluable.
4. **Prepare a list of simple questions for these individual interviews, and include a question about the student's goals**, i.e., "Why do you want to learn English?" or "What are your plans for the future?" The information you gain from this will be a big help in planning your lessons, and in making them more relevant to your students. It also gives the students confidence that you have their needs in mind.
5. **Start out the class energetically**, if possible, with lots of work for the students to do. You don't want to frighten them away by being too rigorous, but it is much easier to let up on the pace a little later than it is to try to build energy into a class that is going slowly. As Alexander the Great once said: "Begin as you mean to go on."
6. **Start group work right away**, if that is one of the techniques you will be using, but balance it with more 'traditional' class work in the same session. New students are often unfamiliar with group learning and prefer a more teacher-centered approach, at least until they've experienced the benefits of a student-centered one.
7. **Don't be disappointed if the class doesn't seem 'fun' at first**. It takes a long time to develop rapport, trust and confidence between teacher and students, and among the students. Even experienced teachers forget this sometimes when they start with a new group.

Happy teaching! —the Editor

Hands-on English

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About the publication

Hands-on English has been helping teachers and tutors with practical teaching ideas since 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who taught ESL to adults in many different settings, and is familiar with the fun and the challenges involved.

Our articles and ideas are contributed by experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have an article or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

Who reads H.O.E.?

We thought you might be interested to know what a wide range our readership covers. We have subscribers working with ESL students in:

- Refugee programs
- Literacy programs
- Community colleges
- Colleges and universities
- Correctional facilities
- Resource centers
- Adult Education programs
- Volunteer tutoring
- Intensive ESL programs
- Teacher training programs
- Religious organizations
- Community Education programs
- Secondary schools
- Workplace education
- Language institutes
- Libraries . . . .and more!

What do our readers have in common? They are dedicated, they are working under sometimes difficult conditions, and they are looking for practical, adult materials that will help their students learn English.

About our Minigrants program

Hands-on English awards a few small grants (of up to $200 each) annually for practical classroom projects. Applications are due each April 30, and are available upon request.

Your editor, Anna Silliman, is always pleased to hear from our readers.

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213

Letters

How to recruit?

A reader wrote to us to ask: "I find your magazine very useful. Here's a problem for consideration: I'm partly responsible for *recruiting* my students. How can I reach everyone who really needs to be in my class? We have open enrollment from September to June."

Do any of our readers have experience with this problem, or opinions about it? Thanks—Editor.

Internet fan

"Keep the World Wide Web addresses coming. I use them to find material for my ESL students. Thanks."

—Joan dos Santos
Collegedale, TN

Our 'Online opportunities' column will continue to be a regular feature. There certainly is a lot of neat stuff online for ESL instructors, and more appears every day. By the way, Hands-on English doesn't have a webpage at this time, but we're working on it!

Lower level activities needed

"This is my first year using *Hands-on English*. I love the ideas for games and things that don't appear like real work, such as CATEGORIES [Vol. 6, No. 3, p. 9]. I also like the multi-level crossword puzzles. I work in a prison with men who are low-level literacy—the lower the level the better, but realia is important too. Thanks,

—Carol Guay
Fishkill Correctional Facility, NY

Can our readers help with lower level activities that will work with literacy students? It is often difficult to find activities for such students that do not appear child-like. They need simple exercises, but with interesting content.

A number of our readers have told us that they have more beginning level and literacy level students than ever before, possibly because many of them are anxious to pass the citizenship exam.

No tipping, please

An ESL instructor told us on the phone that she was teaching newly arrived Russian students about American culture. They were doing a unit on government, and she asked them to take out a dollar bill and look at it. "I wanted to explain to them that although church and state are separate here, we still put 'In God We Trust' on our money."

Unfortunately, some of the students thought she was asking them to pay for something. "I was surprised when I realized they thought I was collecting their money!" she said.

He moves fast

"I got the May/June issue at 2:00 in the afternoon yesterday and by 10:00 that night I had done the following:

- Read it all
- Ordered a book suggested in the *Letters* column (The Idiom Advantage)
- Used the Level A "About Reading" crossword
- Designed and taught my own version of "That's interesting—tell me more" and
- Added a web site listed in *News & notes* (CNN news) to my own webpage.

Not bad for 8 hours and one issue!

—Jack Bailey
Santa Barbara, CA

What on earth did you do for the ***rest*** *of the week??*

Useful stuff

A caller told us "Usually we're happy when we get new materials and find one activity we can use. With the first issue of Hands-on English, we found 5 or 6 things we could use right away!"

We're really delighted to hear this. Our whole purpose is to provide you with useful teaching ideas—if you feel you are getting your money's worth, then we are ***happy****!*
—Editor.

Conversation activity:
(Another) conversation wheel

In a past issue (Vol. 1, No. 6) we published a "conversation wheel" that was very successful, especially for beginning students. In this issue, we bring you a new version of the wheel that will work well with intermediate or advanced students.

The activity

This is an activity that is easy to plan, and you can re-use it at intervals with the same students if you like. It will work as a 15-minute warm-up at the beginning of class, or you can use it for a lengthier discussion exercise.

Preparation

For each group of 3–4 students make a copy of the wheel and cut out one 'pointer' (see next page). It's best if you use very stiff paper, tagboard or glossy cardboard. Punch a sizeable hole in the pointer, as marked, using one end of a 3-hole punch.

Center the pointer on the wheel and stick a push-pin through the pointer and the wheel, with an eraser (or piece of cork) under everything to anchor the pin firmly. Now the pointer should move easily.

How to do it

Make sure the students know all the vocabulary on the wheel. Then write an example question on the board: "What are you interested in?" Give the students an example response of your own as a model. For example, "I'm very interested in classical music."

You may want to give examples for each of the choices on the wheel, to make sure all the students understand them.

Now, the students in their groups will take turns spinning the pointer and responding within their groups. Their answers can range from a one-word response to a sentence or an anecdote, depending on the level of the students and on their interests.

Follow up

As a whole group, the class could compile a list of answers for each category and put them on the blackboard. This is a good way to expand their vocabulary and to reinforce the meaning of each question.

As a writing exercise, each student could select a category, write the question on a piece of paper (i.e., "What are you afraid of?" and write a paragraph or so in response.

Variations

Here are some adjectives you can substitute for the categories on the wheel that will also stimulate some lively discussions. Students can ask, for example, "Tell me about something that's relaxing." (The following examples appeared in our previous article.)

For beginning level students:
good, bad, interesting, sad, easy, important, nice.

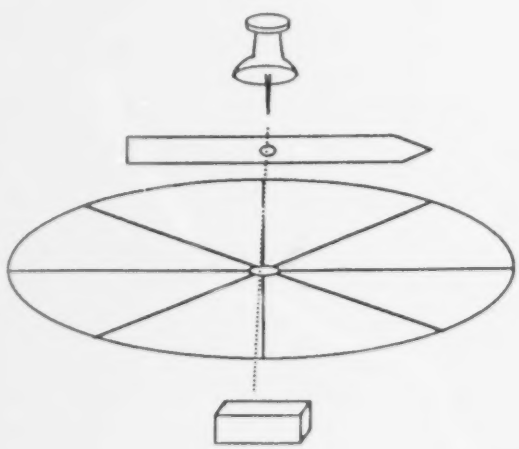
For low intermediate students:
relaxing, difficult, funny, beautiful, dangerous, friendly, sad.

For higher level students:
amusing, challenging, strange, confusing, comfortable, depressing, frightening.

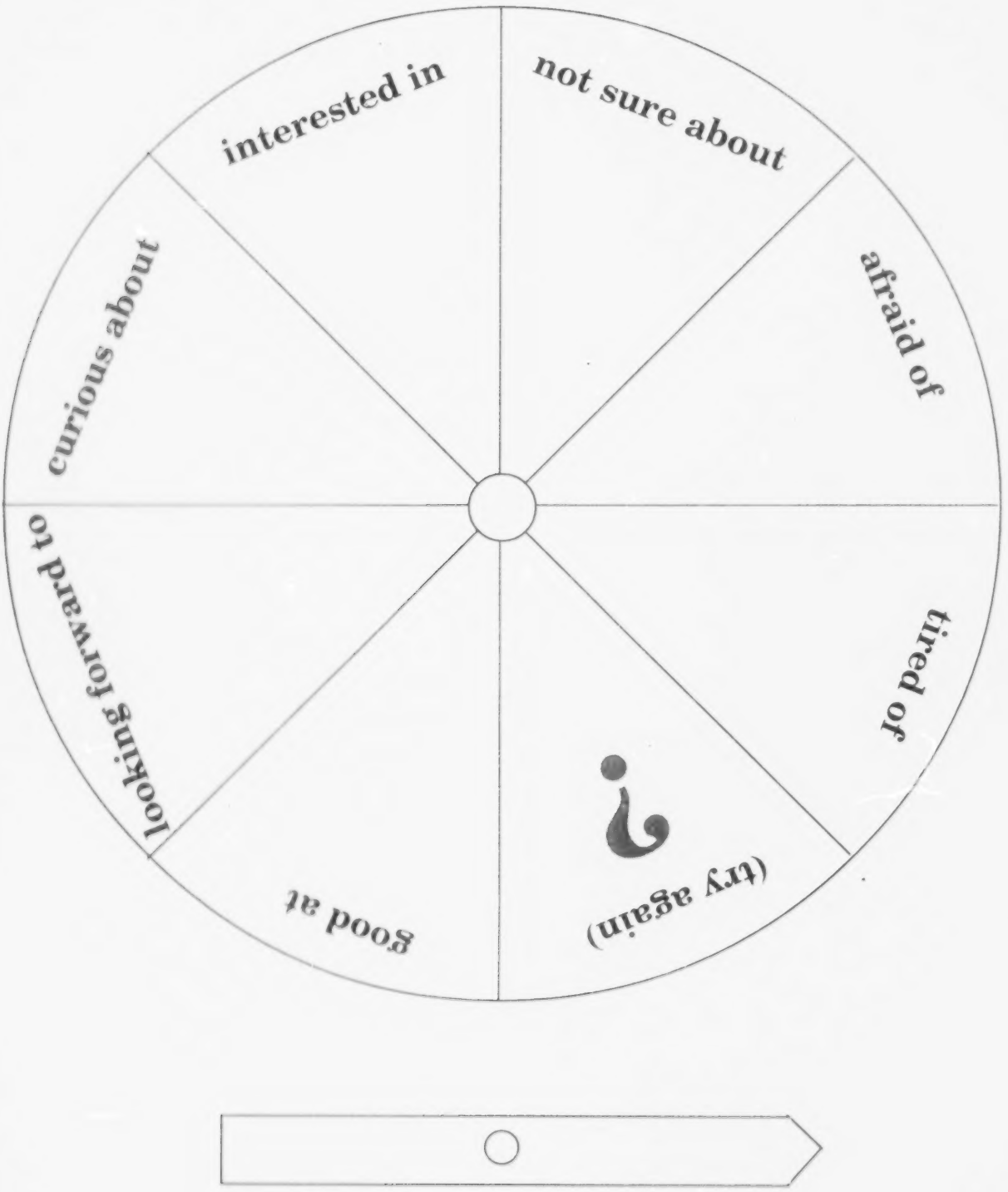
Or, you could give students a blank wheel and have them invent their own categories.

Why it works

This activity provides some spontaneous conversation practice and a chance for students to get to know each other better. It will even work well with a multi-level group, as each student can respond to the questions at their own level.



Conversation wheel, cont'd



On the market:
Where to get ESL catalogs

Get some catalogs

If you're starting to think about looking for materials for fall courses, now's the time to get on publishers' mailing lists. This will get you not only their most recent catalog, but often notices of new publications as they come out.

Hands-on English has compiled a list for you of some of the publishers we think have materials most of interest to adult students. We hope this will help you in finding the right materials for *your* students!

Distributors

ALTA ESL Book Center in Burlingame, California (1-800-ALTA/ESL) and **Delta Systems Co.** in McHenry, Illinois (1-800-323-8270) are both distributors of ESL materials from many publishers as well as publishing their own materials. Their catalogs contain helpful blurbs on each of the books they carry. We generally prefer ordering books from these distributors as their service is fast. Both of these catalogs belong on your shelf as a resource.

Publishers

Addison-Wesley Longman has a useful collection of titles for students of all levels. You'll want their catalog especially for the conversation section and the readers. 1-800-266-8855 x5177.

Audio-Forum carries self-teaching materials for learning 96 foreign languages. They have a separate ESL catalog that includes bilingual materials for speakers of many languages, some videos and guided conversation cards. 1-800-243-1234.

Cambridge University Press is best known for its series of Teacher Resource/Handbook/Training materials, but for classroom use they also carry some practical listening and pronunciation texts of high quality. 1-800-221-4512.

Contemporary Books has citizenship materials; also GED texts. It is now part of NTC, 1-800-323-4900.

Dominie Press is not one of the larger publishers but is a good source for whole-language and multicultural teaching, both for kids and adults. They have a nice collection of folktales from many cultures. 1-800-232-4570.

Heinle & Heinle publishes the written materials for the *Crossroads Café* television/video series. They have a huge catalog with useful materials for every level of ESL from middle school to adult to university, low beginning through advanced academic. Their catalog is also the most detailed of any publisher's, with charts to help you see which materials will work for which students. 1-800-278-2574.

Linmore Publishing is a small "teachers' press" that has a number of books useful for ESL literacy students. If you think literacy texts you've seen are boring or condescending, try these instead. 1-800-336-3656.

NTC, National Textbook Company carries many lifeskills titles, bilingual dictionaries and some teacher resources. 1-800-323-4900.

New Readers Press publishes the *LifePrints* series, many lifeskills titles, workplace literacy materials, and *News for You*, an easy-reading adult newspaper. 1-800-448-8878.

Oxford University Press publishes the 4-part *Crossroads* series (especially good for low-beginners), and the well-known Oxford Picture Dictionary materials. 1-800-451-7556.

Prentice Hall Regents publishes some of the most-used grammar texts, such as the Azar series and the Breyer series, among others. They also carry some useful teacher resources such as the reproducible picture story books. 1-800-375-2375.

Pro Lingua Associates is a small publisher with a high proportion of useful materials. In Hands-on English we refer often to their *Index Card Games*, story cards, and puzzle books. 1-800-366-4775.

TESOL, Inc., the professional organization, has a growing list of publications. Some of these are professional titles such as a Directory of TESOL programs, but many are about practical teaching ideas, such as their New Ways series.

Look online, too

Most publishers are developing websites for browsing and buying online. We haven't included web addresses here but you can use any online search engine to find them.

Confused yet?

Sometimes it's hard to figure out who published a book, since many different companies will carry the same book in their catalog.

Also, publishing companies have merged over the years. Longman, for example, which publishes some of our favorite titles (The *On Your Way* series, the *True Stories in the News* series and the learners' dictionaries) is now part of Addison-Wesley. The old Newbury House titles now belong to Heinle & Heinle. If you are a *really* old ESL teacher (like us, ahem) you'll remember the Alemany Press books which now belong to Prentice Hall Regents.

Finally, books which look great in the catalog may turn out not to be quite appropriate for your particular students. You'll have to try, try again to find materials that will suit their needs.

Addresses

Send your catalog requests to these publishers at the following addresses:

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14 Adrian Court
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Publishers:

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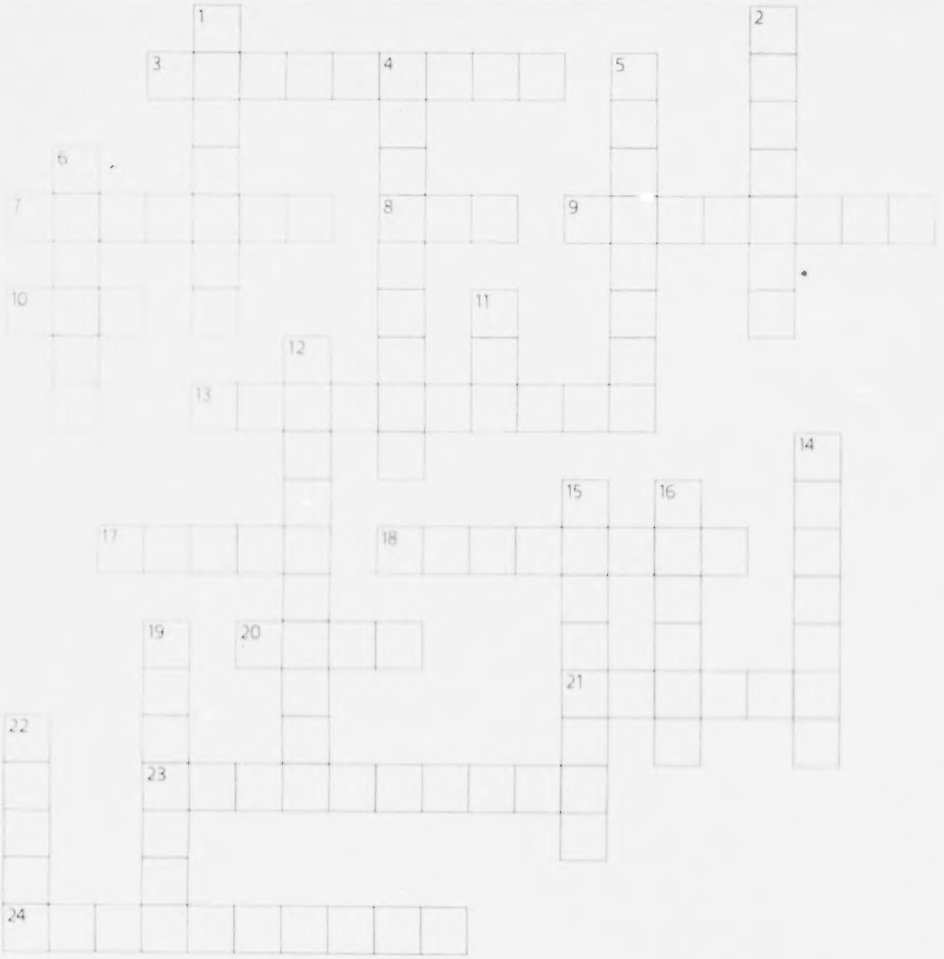

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twelve
twenty-five
twenty-four
two
two hundred
zero

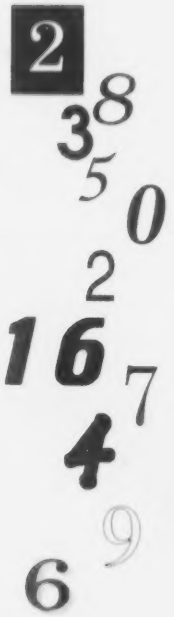
Level A

Across clues

3. 65
7. 1,000,000,000 = a '_____'
8. 2
9. The symbol "–" means _____.
10. 6
13. 200
17. 50
18. The symbol "x" means _____.
20. 0
21. 12
23. 25
24. 24

Down clues

1. 1.000,000 = 'a _____'
2. 100 = 'a _____'
4. 44
5. 1,000 = 'a _____'
6. The symbol " + " means _____.
11. The symbol "+" means _____.
12. 47
14. 16
15. 18
16. 11
19. 15
22. 8



Level B

Across clues

3. Thirty plus thirty-five =
7. A million times a thousand = a _____
8. One plus one =
9. "Minus" means _____ some numbers.
10. Nine minus three =
13. Forty times ten, divided by two =
17. Half of one dollar = _____ cents
18. "Times" means _____ some numbers.
20. Seven minus seven =
21. Two times six =
23. One hundred divided by four =
24. Six times four =

Down clues

1. One thousand times one thousand = one _____
2. Fifty times two = one _____
4. Two times two times eleven =
5. Ten times one hundred = a _____
6. The symbol " = " means _____ some numbers.
11. "Plus" means _____ some numbers.
12. Two times twenty plus seven =
14. Six plus ten =
15. Ten plus eight =
16. Thirty-three divided by three =
19. Three times five =
22. One plus three plus three plus one =

Level C

Across clues

3. Some people retire from work when they are _____ years old.
7. The earth has more than five _____ people.
8. How many is 'a pair'?
9. The difference between 26 and 10 is 16. To get this answer, you have to _____.
10. Sales tax is different in each area, but it is usually five or _____ percent.
13. The United States government is more than _____ years old.
17. Half of something is _____ percent.
18. 10 times 60 is 600. To get this answer, you have to _____.
20. This number means "nothing."
21. How many is 'a dozen'?
23. A 'quarter' is worth _____ cents.
24. How many is 'two dozen'?

Down clues

1. There are more than 250 _____ people in the U.S.
2. We say "one _____ percent" when we mean all of something.
4. I am forty years old. My sister was born four years earlier than I. She is _____.
5. My uncle bought a new car. He paid more than nine _____ dollars.
6. If you _____ ten by five, you get two.
11. If you _____ seven and three and one, you get eleven.
12. George is 25 years old. His father was 22 when he was born. How old is George's father now?
14. "Did you say *sixty* dollars?" "No, no, I said _____!"
15. In the U.S., citizens can vote when they are at least _____ years old.
16. My son is thirteen years old and my daughter is two years younger. She is _____ years old.
19. Next year my niece can get a drivers license. How old is she now?
22. The year after 1997 is 199____.

Note to the instructor: This multi-level puzzle has three levels of difficulty—Level A may be the easiest, and Level C the most challenging. Students can try the puzzle without the word list as an additional challenge. Make extra copies of the puzzle and clues, because students often like to try the puzzle more than once!

Pronunciation exercise:

"Did you say 30 or 13??"

Explain to your students that because the difference between these two words is very small, even native speakers have trouble hearing them correctly sometimes.

Note that the 'tens' have an emphasis on the first part of the word (*THIRty*), while the 'teens' have their emphasis on the last syllable of the word (*thirTEEN*). Also, the length of the *-TEEN* syllable is usually drawn out longer than the short, quick *-ty*. Try this aloud with your students until they get the hang of it:

30	13
40	14
50	15
60	16
70	17
80	18
90	19

Testing

Just for practice, have a student come to the board and point silently at the correct numbers while you call them out aloud. You can continue this activity with more students until you are sure everyone hears the difference.

A Misunderstanding

Show the students this dialogue between two native speakers:

Sam: My uncle's birthday is today. He's 30 years old.
Jean: Did you say thirTEEN?
Sam: No, no, he's THIRty. Three - zero.
Jean: Oh, I see.

Have the students practice this dialogue together in pairs. Here's another example:

Jean: My niece is 14 years old tomorrow.
Sam: Did you say FORty?
Jean: No, no, she's fourTEEN. One - four.
Sam: Oh, I see.

Practice activity

Once the students understand how to ask for the correct number, have them do some more 'misunderstanding' examples together for practice. Some examples are given below, or you can make up your own.

Two approaches will work very well for this exercise. For beginning students, the whole group approach may be best—each student gets one card, and moves around the room, practicing the above dialog with each of the other students in the class in turn.

For more advanced students, it might be more interesting to work seated in pairs, with each student taking half of the examples. They repeat the dialog, each time with a different example.

Follow up

A good follow-up activity, perhaps in the next session, would be to have students read these sentences to each other for written dictation. During this exercise, the student who is writing can ask for clarification in order to write the sentence accurately.

Why it works

Learning to make the distinction clearly between 'teens' and 'tens' will help students in their daily lives. Also, asking for clarification is an important skill that will make communicating easier.

I paid 2 dollars and 60 cents for a hamburger at lunch.	I have 16 relatives coming to visit me this weekend.
This shirt cost me $18.	My home is 17 miles from this school.
I have lived in the U.S. for 30 years.	I have an uncle who is 90 years old.
I have 13 years experience as an office manager.	My grandmother died when she was 80 years old.
The time is exactly 2:15 pm.	I will call you tomorrow at 8:50.
My telephone bill this month was $90.	I can walk to school in about 40 minutes.
I know a man who is 16 years older than his wife.	My sister had a baby boy. She was in labor for 17 hours.

Tools & techniques:

A numbers dictation (and puzzle)

Here's a speaking and listening activity that's easy to adapt to the needs of your students. Beginning students, for example, can always use some more practice responding to numbers in English. More advanced students can often benefit, too, depending on their native language. Some languages treat numbers differently, and it can be tricky adjusting to a new system.

Start by doing one example for the whole group. Students write and calculate while you dictate. For example:

Teacher says:	Students write:
1 plus 2	1 + 2 = 3
minus 1	3 – 1 = 2
plus 28	2 + 28 = 30
times 2	30 x 2 = 60
divided by 6	60 — 6 = 10
What's the answer?	

Next, have the students try this in pairs. One student gets a card with a problem on it and dictates it to the other student. If the answer comes out wrong, they try again.

Once they have done a few examples each, they can try writing their own problems. Give them about 5 minutes to design a 'puzzler' for their partner, then try it out.

It might be fun for individual students to present a problem to the whole group. Remember, though, not to let the math get too difficult—this is really a language activity and not a challenge to people's math skills.

Level A

1 + 2, + 3, + 4, + 5, = 15

16 + 60, – 6, ÷ 2 = 35

100 – 50, x 2, + 1 = 101

13 + 3, + 30, – 10 = 36

36 + 4, ÷ 2, + 13, – 2 = 31

500 + 50, – 15, – 25, – 10 = 500

24 ÷ 4, + 2, x 2, – 6, ÷ 5 = 2

80 – 50, ÷ 3, x 14 = 140

Level B

45 + 5, + 30, – 10 = 70

3 + 4, + 15, + 1, + 2, – 25 = 0

12 + 1, + 50, – 3, – 10 = 50

9 + 8, + 7, + 6, + 5, – 4, – 3, – 2, – 1 = 25

30 – 5, + 2, – 17, ÷ 2 = 5

3 x 4, + 6, ÷ 3, – 1, + 10, – 5 =10

6 + 11, – 2, + 3, + 7, – 2 = 23

2 x 5, + 20, + 30, + 40, + 50 = 150

Level C

17 x 3, + 31, – 1, + 16, + 3, ÷ 20 = 5

116 x 2, – 12, x 40, – 1,000 = 7,800

420 ÷ 4, + 115, – 100, ÷ 30 = 4

336 +415, –101, ÷ 50, x1,000 = 13,000

5,000 x 2 , ÷ 50, x 16, + 300 = 3,500

113 x 30, – 300, + 30, ÷ 3 = 1040

1, 216 + 74, – 19, + 29, ÷ 10 = 130

662 x 3, –144, –720, + 288, ÷ 2 =705

Follow-up activity

If your students are familiar enough with each other, have them put together a list of all the students with their addresses and home phone numbers. To do this, they need to interview each student in the group. This will give everybody lots of practice in speaking and comprehending numbers accurately.

Grammar grab-bag:
"A car costs more than $1.15"

Comparing items using 'more than' and 'less than'

Here is an exercise that will give beginning level students a chance to practice using 'more than' and 'less than' while getting additional practice pronouncing numbers clearly at the same time. The exercise can be adapted for intermediate students as well.

You will need two sets of index cards, preferably of two different colors. On one set, write the names of some consumer items. On the other set, write a price on each card.

The students can work in small groups of three or four for this activity. Have a student draw one card from each pile, and using the information on the cards, make a sentence about the cost of the item. For example, "A postage stamp costs less than $24.17."

Student-made cards

Students can continue by taking turns drawing cards and speaking. When they have finished the cards, they can shuffle them and start again. If the exercise is easy for them, though, it might be more fun at this point for each student to write an item on three or four blank cards, and then continue the activity with the student-written materials.

Adapting for higher levels

For intermediate students, you can suggest they elaborate on their answers. For example, they can choose from the following:

more	less
much more	much less
a little more	a little less

and they should explain what *kind* of items they mean—a new car? a used car? etc.

Why it works

The students will get comfortable with this useful structure by playing with it in a limited context. And the activity can be pretty humorous depending on how outlandish the items prices are. When students laugh, it's usually a good sign that they comprehend.

a car	$16.60
a postage stamp	$2,000.00
a hamburger	$24.17
a television	$1.15
a pair of shoes	$100,000
a dictionary	$326.70
a telephone	$12.90
a gallon of milk	$190.50
a newspaper	$40.40
a jacket	$50.15

Hints & tips

Do you have an ESL tip that works for you? Why not share it with our readers? Teachers and tutors are always looking for new ideas!

ESL for elders

In a past issue, a teacher wrote to ask if anyone knew of ESL materials written specifically for older adults. We've found a couple of suggestions:

"A Resource Guide for Reaching and Teaching Older Persons," developed by the Florida Council on Aging might be useful, especially for literacy organizations. This is not specifically for ESL students, but for older persons in general. Order free of charge from the DAEL (Division of Adult Education and Literacy) Clearinghouse, U.S. Dept of Education, 600 Independence Ave SW, Washington, DC 20202-7240. Ask for document number SA-1800.

More teaching ideas for this group came from Diana Della Costa in Kissimmee, Florida. She points out that **Blockbuster Video** (and perhaps other video outlets as well) have Community Service videos available. Many of these topics might be suitable for senior citizens, and the information is presented in simple and easy to understand language. Some of the topics she found were: First Aid, Fire Safety, Back Pain, Arthritis, CPR, Crime Prevention, Women & Heart Disease, Income Tax, and many more. (Some topics were also available in Spanish.)

These community service videos may be available free of charge, or free to instructors who are using them with their students.

Diana also pointed out that many older adults are interested in current affairs and reading the newspaper. Your local or regional paper very likely has an educational supplement for teachers with activities and worksheets you can use to familiarize students with the paper.

Finally, ask at your public library what resources they have for seniors. Often these will include videos, large print books, and picture books on American cultural topics.

Garage sales galore

Take advantage of the summer garage sale season to point out the newspaper listings for garage sales to your students. They could read through the ads, choose the sales they'd like to visit and find the locations on a street map.

Any students who have already been in this country for a while may already be experts on garage sales. If so, have them relate their experiences and give some advice to newcomers!

National Geographic as resource

Dianne E. Scott wrote to us about a cultural sharing activity she did with her students:

"I collected a whole 'slew' of National Geographics over a period of time. I have the students select a culture or cultures that they have some knowledge about and find a National Geographic with some featured article about this culture. Students select pictures and prepare a small scrapbook on this culture.

"In addition to the photographs they can include stamps, flags or other realia. These scrapbooks can be shared with other class members at a selected class meeting. Written work can be included if the student is able to write a short account. Rather than just copying the Geographic article, I encourage students to write about their city, town or village or about a favorite holiday celebrated in their country.

"This type of account can be a great sharing experience, especially for advanced students. Written accounts can include family memories or school experiences as well as geographic data. Students can work in groups if there are two or more from the same culture."

News & notes

LVA Literacy Summit

Literacy Volunteers of America will hold its "Literacy Summit" on October 29–Nov 1 in Charlotte, NC, and is open to anyone in the literacy field.

Workshops will include a session on ESL tutor training, as well as on the training of volunteer trainers. There will be numerous sessions on learning disabilities, and a presentation entitled: "Alternatives to Whining about Welfare Reform."

For more information, phone LVA at: 315-472-0001 x202. Send email enquiries to: LVANAT@aol.com.

Workplace ESL reference

For an interesting review of a number of different workplace models, see "Workplace ESL Instruction; Interviews from the Field" by Miriam Burt and published by the Center for Applied Linguistics (1997). To order your copy of this 55-page book, send $5 (this includes shipping & handling) to: NCLE, 1118 22nd St, NW, Washington, DC 20037-1214. For more information about their adult ESL publications, see the webpage at http://www.cal.org/ncle.

Upcoming conferences

◆ October 3–4, 1997—**Mid-America TESOL (MID TESOL)** annual conference in Grand Island, NE. Contact Carolyn Shields, UNI. Phone: 318-273-6010. email: carolyn.shields@uni.edu

◆ October 4, 1997—**Virginia TESOL** fall conference. Contact Carmen Willhoite, Phone: 757-483-5738.

◆ October 17–18, 1997—**TexTESOL IV** conference in Houston, TX. Contact Terry Shearer, phone: 281-443-8606, email: sheart@nhmccd.edu.

◆ October 23–25, 1997—**Midwest Regional TESOL** conference in Milwaukee, WI. Contact Gary J. Krukar, phone: 414-456-5312, email: krukarg@milwaukee.tec.wi.us.

◆ October 30–Nov 1, 1997—**Colorado TESOL** conference in Denver, CO. Contact John Jordan, phone: 970-330-8008, email: jjordan@aims.edu.

Online opportunities

Online ESL Bookstore

Dave's ESL Cafe Bookstore, at: http://www.eslcafe.com/bookstore lists all sorts of ESL books in an assortment of categories. Unfortunately, there isn't a blurb on most of these books, but by clicking on the title you are linked to amazon.com's listing for the book, which often gives you the table of contents and sometimes a link to a book review. If you want, you can actually purchase these books online.

The categories of books, called "Bookshelves" at Dave's ESL Cafe include: English for Specific Purposes, Games, Grammar, Internet for Teachers, Literacy, Software, Songs, U.S. Immigration, Writing and many, many more.

Distance Ed for teachers

Indiana University offers a Distance Education Program which includes independent study and online coursework for teacher education. Although their Education Department doesn't specifically offer TESOL courses, many of their offerings include an ESL emphasis. Some of their 3-hour credit courses include: Developing a Workplace Literacy Program, Family Literacy, Adult Literacy, Computer-Assisted Language Learning, and Language Learning Strategies. Check it out for yourself at: http://education.indiana.edu/~disted/menu.html

Job hunting

Looking for an ESL Job? Go to Dave's ESL Cafe again (http://www.eslcafe.com) and see the Link Page for Teachers, which includes information about jobs.

Another place to start is withTESOL, Inc. (*the* professional organization for ESL teachers in the U.S. and abroad). See their homepage at http://www.tesol.edu and look for the Career Services section.

by Meg Gam, ESL teacher in New York, NY.

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Classified ads

You can place a text ad in ***Hands-on English*** *for $10 an issue. Ads must be 30 words or less.*

Publications

New! **Shenanigames, Grammar-Focused ESL-EFL Activities and Games** by James Kealey and Donna Inness (Pro Lingua Associates). 49 games for practicing specific grammar and conversation in the ESL or EFL classroom. Clear instructions, and 96 pages of photocopyable masters. $23. (ISBN 0-86647-100-6) ***Pro Lingua Associates 800-366-4775.***

Get the ***Hands-on English*** **six year index!** Our index of articles for all of the past issues through April 1997 is finally ready and available for $2.50 per copy (20 pages). Contact the *Hands-on English* office if you would like to have this useful tool.

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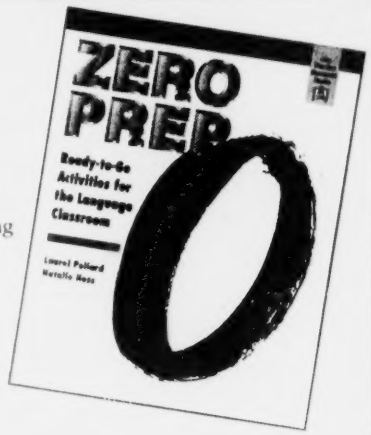

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Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

Contents:

Letters 3

From the field: About recruiting students 4

Minigrants: About our 1997 awardees 5

Tools & techniques: Collaborative writing 6

Idea file: A conversation activity 7

Multi-level crossword puzzle: About nutrition 8

Reading activity: "The Truck Got Stuck" 10

Writing: Combining sentences 11

Multi-level dictation: "The Truck..." with 3 levels 12

Editorial:
New developments at HOE

We hope you're having a great start to a new school year. This issue includes a number of activities designed to work with students at a wide range of levels, so we hope they will be useful for you!

Our new web site

Over the summer we've been working on setting up a web site for *Hands-on English* on the World Wide Web, and we're very excited about it! Our new web site will provide information about this publication to teachers who may not know about it yet, and we hope it will attract some new subscribers.

For you who already subscribe, though, there are also some useful things to see there. We've put a list of all our back issues there, for example, in case you'd like to browse through them. And, we've reprinted an article we published a couple of years ago called "40 helpful hints & tips for making your ESL teaching easier and better!" (Vol 4, No. 2) If you missed this article or don't have a copy of it, you can now get it free from our web site.

Something new for you

Best of all, we've decided to "publish" online a current events activity that you can use with your students. Each month (we hope!) we'll put an ESL activity there that you can download free. Our readers have told us many times that they like current events-type activities, but publishing them in *Hands-on English* is tricky because of the delay in time between our office to your hands. It would be too bad if we sent you something that was too outdated to use!

Now we can provide you with some teaching ideas around current events topics, and change them as the news develops. By the time you read this, the October activity should be there, so try connecting to us at this address:

http://www.4w.com/hoe/

No connection?

By the way, if you have no opportunity at all to get onto the World Wide Web, you can still get a copy of this activity. Just send us a stamped, self-addressed envelope with a request for that month's current events activity and we'll send you a copy. We expect, though, that most people can get access to our web site, either at home, at school or at a library.

Feedback

Let us know what you think of our web site! We'd be interested to hear any suggestions or ideas you have for improving it or making it more useful.

We sincerely hope that extending *Hands-on English* onto the Internet will make us more accessible to you and more useful for you and your students.

Coming next issue....

Our regular **News & notes** column, as well as **Online opportunities** didn't fit into this crowded issue, but will be back next time!

228

Hands-on English

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About the publication

Hands-on English has been helping teachers and tutors with practical teaching ideas since 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who taught ESL to adults in many different settings, and is familiar with the fun and the challenges involved.

Our articles and ideas are contributed by experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have an article or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

Who reads H.O.E.?

We thought you might be interested to know what a wide range our readership covers. We have subscribers working with ESL students in:

Refugee programs
Literacy programs
Community colleges
Colleges and universities
Correctional facilities
Resource centers
Adult Education programs
Volunteer tutoring
Intensive ESL programs
Teacher training programs
Religious organizations
Community Education programs
Secondary schools
Workplace education
Language institutes
Libraries . . . .and more!

What do our readers have in common? They are dedicated, they are working under sometimes difficult conditions, and they are looking for practical, adult materials that will help their students learn English.

About our Minigrants program

Hands-on English awards a few small grants (of up to $200 each) annually for practical classroom projects. Applications are due each April 30, and are available upon request.

Your editor, Anna Silliman, is always pleased to hear from our readers!

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7-3

Letters

...cards, email messages & calls

Eager reader

"Hello! Just thought I'd pass along my opinion of your newsletter. It's wonderful! The other teachers and I just love the ideas—especially the multi-level activities. We want more of those kinds of activities! Maybe you could publish a little more often, too. . ."

—Amy Frankowski
Northeast Wisconsin Technical College

Let me guess—you'd like it published daily, and delivered to your door before 7 am, right? Sounds perfectly reasonable!!

Actually, the cost of publishing will probably prevent us from moving in that direction soon. You ***can*** *get an extra activity from us, though, if you go to our web site (see description on page 1). Hope that helps!*

Needs games

Bill Rubens, an instructor in Taiwan, has communicated with us about games for his EFL students. He is interested in commercially available games that would be useful for language learners, especially the advanced students.

Any ideas out there? If so, let us know and we'll pass the info along to Bill.

By coincidence, we just received a copy of a card game called "Rummi-Word," which consists of a set of cards with letters on them (sort of like Scrabble in card form). The game comes with instructions and suggestions for ways to play. The creator of this game, Walter Wood, is a retired educator and you can order directly from him at: 2258-B Via Puerta, Laguna Hills, CA 92653 USA. Each pack of cards is $7.95, or 2 for $15 (p/h included).

More on citizenship

This feedback came attached to a renewal order:

"1. You are doing a great job—keep it up! 2. Could you have more multi-level dictation exercises? Our students love these. 3. Could you publish exercises which will help students prepare for U.S. Citizenship exams?"

—Mark & Pam Snyder
Collingdale, Pennsylvania

Our response to this is: 1. Thanks, we'll certainly try. 2. Yes, see page 12 of this issue for another multi-level dictation. 3. We would be very interested in hearing from readers who have specific suggestions on teaching citizenship, and would be glad to bring you more on this topic as we find some useful ideas. (For a starting point, see our article on teaching for citizenship in the March/April 1997 issue.)

Where the ideas come from

"You put 'oomph' in my program. I look forward to receiving *Hands-on*. When some idea clicks I will try to send it on to you. Keep up the great work—you are surely meeting a need."

—Gloria Stanton
Somerset, New York

I certainly hope you will share some activity or teaching experience with us—we rely on great input from great folks like you to keep up that 'oomph'!

Go see the books

Several readers contacted us about the article in our last issue, "Where to get ESL catalogs," to say that reading about materials in catalogs isn't enough. It's often hard to tell from the description in a catalog whether a book is appropriate for your needs. To get a 'hands-on' chance to look at ESL materials, our readers recommend going to conferences when you can! Most conferences, even the small ones, have a book exhibit.

From the field:
Recruiting students

In our last issue, a reader inquired about ideas for recruiting students for her program. We received this very helpful letter in response:

"Dear Readers of Hands-on English,

"I am responding to a letter on how to recruit students that need ESL classes. I work with an Even Start Program that also has open enrollment, and the following are some of the tactics that I use to recruit students:

1) Your present students are your best resource! Find out about them and what family members and friends that they have in the area that might be interested in ESL classes. Chances are they know other people who want to learn English as well.
2) Call social service agencies in the community, and tell them who you are and what you do. Offer to come by and bring your business card and some brochures about your program. With the information in hand and a name and a face to go with it, they will be more likely to refer people your way.
3) Visit the personnel office of companies in the area that employ large numbers of non-English speaking people. They are often eager to see their workers learn more English because it will help them, too.
4) Ethnic food stores and churches that serve international populations are often good places to contact and leave brochures. Or you may want to attend a service and talk to people after it is over, with permission from the pastor.
5) Last of all, be patient! As a program develops and grows, people will hear about it naturally as it becomes known in the community.

Good luck!" —Maureen Maher, Even Start
Athens, Georgia

We also received a letter from someone who works in a church-based program, with some further useful suggestions:

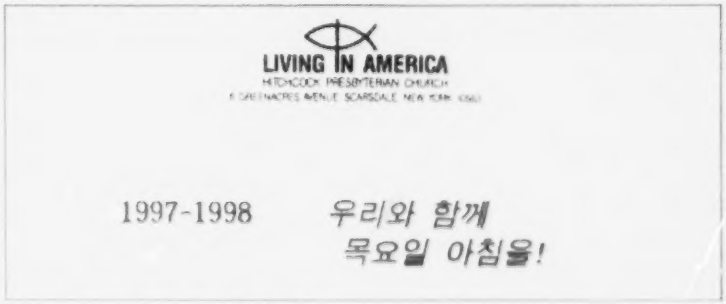
"We have open enrollment from September to June and recruit our own students. Word of mouth helps, but we use other techniques as well:

1) In mid-August, we mail a 'Dear Student' letter to all students from the previous year who have self-addressed an envelope during one of the final classes in May or June. In the envelope we enclose a brochure (3-fold on colored paper) of information about our program, and dates & times for registration and for classes. We ask former students to pass the information on to someone else if they will not be returning themselves.
2) In mid-August, we also mail a 'Dear Friend' letter, with the same brochure enclosed, giving information about our program, to real estate agents, businesses frequented by our students (Japanese and Korean food stores, Korean churches, day care centers), local schools and the ESL teachers thereof, PTA's and the international families committees thereof.
3) We post flyers about our program in English, Japanese, Korean and Spanish in places where potential students will see them. Many of these flyers are distributed by former and returning students and by teachers.
4) We leave piles of brochures about our program in public libraries of nearby communities and in schools.

"Our program, *Living in America*, began in 1976 and is a one morning a week English conversation program for international women in our area. The teachers are all volunteers. In the course of a year, we register about 150 students who are divided by ability level into 9 classes. Each class has two teachers working together. Other teachers are also available to substitute for absent teachers."

—Eleanor November, Coordinator &
Teacher, *Living in America*
Hitchcock Presbyterian Church
Scarsdale, New York

The flyer says: "Come join us Thursday mornings!"



231

Minigrant awards, 1997:
Plenty of promising projects!

About the Minigrants

We make these Minigrant awards annually for innovative ESL teaching projects. Applications for the coming year will be available in January '98, and will be due on April 30th.

To get more information or to put your name on the mailing list to receive an application, contact: Hands-on English, P.O. Box 256, Crete, NE 68333 USA. Phone: 402-826-5426 Fax: 402-826-3997 Email: hoe@navix.net

Every year, we get the most wonderful warm feeling when it comes time to present our annual Minigrant awards! It always gives us great pleasure to help make a good project possible, and this year's bunch is especially promising.

This summer, we awarded seven grants for ESL projects which are described below. When the projects are completed, we will report to you about them in *Hands-on English*, to help spread the teaching ideas around!

A culture project

Vickie Cook, instructor in "The Reading Link" program at Kaskaskia College in Centralia, Illinois.

Her project is a city-wide scavenger hunt to help students learn to find their way around their new environment. Students will learn to give and follow directions, while being introduced to important locations in a non-threatening activity.

An assessment project

Becky Dyer, teacher at South Bay Adult School in Redondo Beach, California.

Her project will involve students in establishing a 'portfolio' which will help them set goals and track their progress. This technique will help promote self-sufficiency in the students and continuity in their program of study.

A reading project

Beth Easter, teacher in the Adult Literacy Program at Lehmann Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Her project will set up a traveling library of pleasure reading materials to encourage students to read more. Students will have a chance to post a short "review" for their classmates of the books they have read. This activity will introduce students to a type of reading that is different from academic work, and that will benefit their long-term language development.

A writing project

Patricia Jody, teacher at the English Language Institute of the University of Southern Florida in Tampa, Florida.

Her students will present some of their experiences in dealing with culture shock and adapting to a new culture, in the form of letters of advice to future students. This communication will help the current students identify some of the adaptation strategies they have used which are successful.

A citizenship project

Eden Rock, tutor at Person to Person in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Together with her colleagues, she will design audio taped citizenship materials for student self-study. They will prepare some tapes all in English, others will be bilingual tapes in English/Vietnamese and English/Somali. Students who are on a waiting list for the program can benefit from these materials.

A presentation project

Carol Wertz and **Cathy Scarr**, teachers in the Basic ESL program at Shasta College, in Shasta Lake, California.

Each of their students will select a skill or hobby that they can teach the other students, and will prepare a lesson about it. Students acting as teachers will be a way to give them lots of practice in speaking as well as improving self-confidence.

A survival project

Natasha Zahn, ESL teacher at the South East Regional Resource Center in Juneau, Alaska.

Her students will prepare a guidebook of the city, including all of the services and shopping that new arrivals need to learn about. The process of gathering the information will help them gain survival skills; the guidebook itself will serve as a useful introduction to new arrivals.

Tools & techniques:

'Collaborative writing'—an all skills activity

For many of our ESL students, writing is a struggle. I have found that collaborative writing, a technique that gets students working and talking together in a small group to produce one paper, is a good way to help my students feel more at ease writing. It is a very intense and focused kind of writing, requiring a high level of cooperation and negotiation. I have used this technique successfully with a variety of levels, from high beginning on up, and in settings ranging from middle school to university-level to adult.

Why write in groups?

Collaborative writing is useful for several reasons. It permits students to produce a group paper, so that the risk of writing is reduced. Because the writing is collaborative, those who have stronger oral skills but do not write well may participate by adding their ideas to the story and reading it as it is written. During the process of negotiating what to say and how to say it, students are able to try out ideas, words and structures in a safe, small group environment. They think carefully about and discuss what they are writing. Knowing that their product will be read by the rest of the class, students participate fully in their groups in order to write the best possible piece.

Topics can vary according to level and curriculum. Lower level students usually use familiar topics, such as retelling a story that has been previously read or worked on orally. The class might look at a picture story or cartoon, for example, and talk about it in class. As they talk about it, the teacher writes words on the board which they can use in their writing. More open-ended tasks, such as finishing a story, writing a traditional story which the whole group knows, or doing a jigsaw activity, with different groups contributing different aspects of a common topic are appropriate for higher level students.

Preparation

While newsprint or other large paper can be used, I have had most success using the large plastic erasable sheets which are available in many business stores. They are a bit expensive initially (about $20 for a pad of 18 sheets), but they can be washed off and reused (usually I can use the same sheets for an entire quarter). They must be used with erasable overhead markers. Wet paper towels can be used as erasers. The great virtue of using these sheets is that a group can experiment with what they want to write, then erase and make changes without it looking as messy as it would on paper. Furthermore, the sheets can be stuck to the wall simply by rubbing on them to generate static electricity.

How to do it

In a lower level class, begin the activity with some input (a story, cartoon, picture or topic) and elicit vocabulary. If you are using a story the students have already read, encourage them to retell it in their own words, without looking at the original. As they tell the story, write cue words on the board. This enables weaker students to participate more actively in the writing stage and reduces or eliminates their using dictionaries.

Next, divide the class into groups of three to five each. Hand out large sheets of paper or plastic and pens for writing. As each group begins to write, encourage group members to rely on each other rather than on you. Their negotiation with each other is an important part of the process. As each group finishes writing, post their paper on the wall.

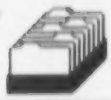
When all of the papers are posted, have each group walk around the room together, reading other groups' papers. Let them put a question mark (but no changes) next to things they don't understand or want to talk about on other papers. Finally, have the entire class look at each one and talk about its strengths and about any corrections they suggest. It is not necessary to correct every error. The class might choose to focus on one kind of error instead, such as verb tense.

Suggested resource: *Picture Stories* by Fred Ligon and Elizabeth Tannenbaum (Addison-Wesley Longman 1990), is especially useful for beginners. ISBN 0-8013-0366-4.

*—by **Abbie Tom**, ESL teacher at at Durham Technical and Community College in Durham, North Carolina.*

Abbie says,: "When I use this technique I walk around the room and listen to what the students are saying. Imagine my surprise when I hear Jose, who rarely talks, telling his group how to write the story. Ana, who I thought didn't pay any attention to grammar, is pointing out that the story shifted from past to present tense. Bong, who hasn't talked to anybody since she came, is asking her group members which word they want her to write down. Everybody is so busy working together that they don't even notice that I'm listening. That's my idea of a successful activity!"

Idea file:
Talk up a storm!



You never know when you might need a good activity in a hurry. Keep this card handy in your 'idea file' for those spur-of-the moment occasions!

A conversation activity

Here's a speaking activity that doesn't take very much preparation. It gives your students plenty to talk about while giving them a chance to use their imaginations and life experiences to do some problem-solving.

Have the students gather in groups of three or four. These can be mixed-level groups. Tell the students that they will soon hear a news report with some surprising news. After they hear this news, they have to make some decisions about what to do. Here are some questions to help structure their discussion (you can post these where everyone can see them):

Did you understand the news report?
What do you think it means?
What should we do now?
Should we call someone?
What should we tell the other students?
Do we need to buy anything?
Do we need to get anything?
What is our plan?

Tell the students that when they have decided what their plan is, they will report to the rest of the class.

Choosing a news item

Now the teacher gives a news announcement to the class. You can do this as a radio broadcast, or using a photo or diagram as if it were a TV broadcast. Use an imaginary emergency-type situation that the students can relate to, but not so realistic as to alarm anyone! Here are two possible examples:

"NEWS ALERT—Although it is only September, there is a winter storm approaching. We expect the temperature to fall below zero, and up to four feet of snow to fall in the next three hours."

"ANNOUNCEMENT—The governor of the state is coming here to visit this school tomorrow, and he (or she) will visit the ESL classes."

Discussion

After the students have had enough time to brainstorm some ideas, have each group report their plan back to the class. Discuss the pros and cons of each course of action. You will be amazed at the good ideas and leadership qualities that emerge from this discussion.

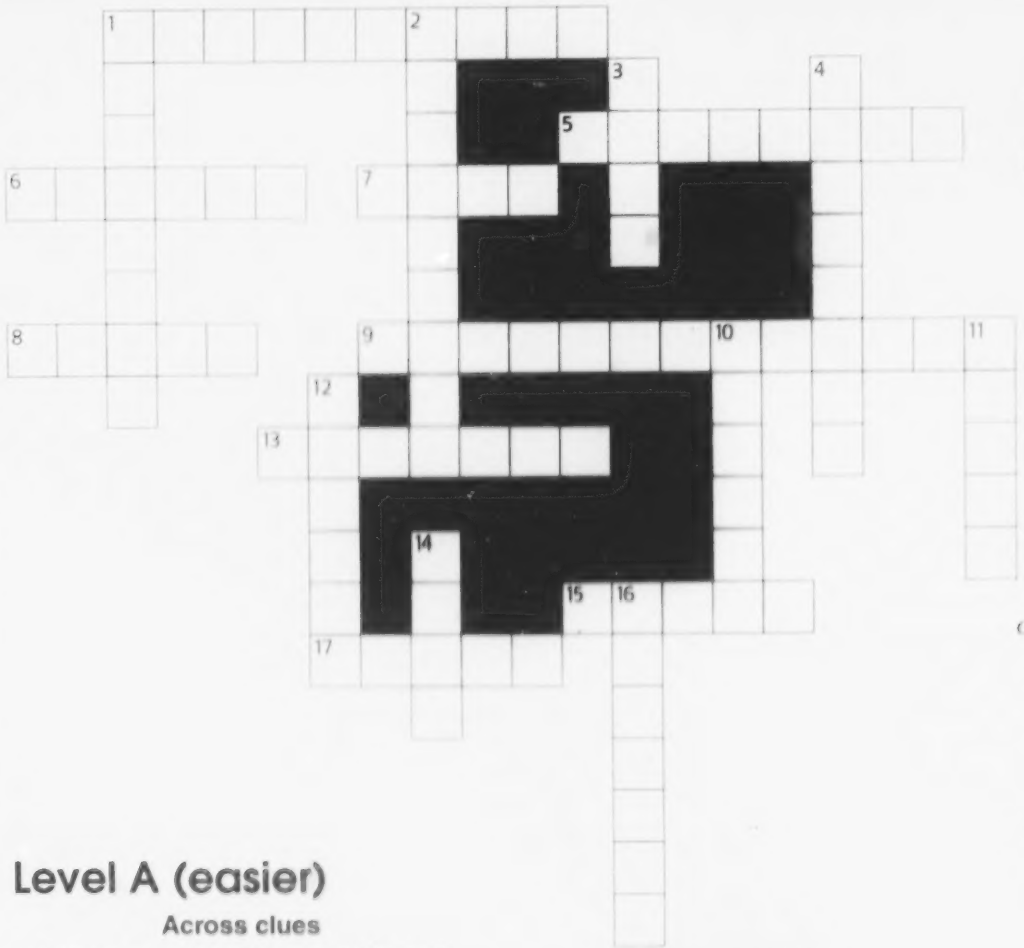
Talk up a storm!

Purpose:	Speaking & listening practice; vocabulary development.
Level:	High beginners through advanced; works well for multi-level groups.
Time:	A half-hour or more, depending on students' interest.
Materials:	None; need a clever idea for a news item.

1. Have students sit in groups of 3 or 4. Multi-level grouping is OK.
2. Set the scene for an imaginary news broadcast. Tell students that when they hear the news, they will need to come up with a plan of action in their group.
3. Post some questions for them to discuss (this is especially helpful for lower-level students or those unaccustomed to unstructured activities). You might also ask them to outline their plan in writing as they work together.
4. Read an imaginary news announcement for all to hear. Choose an 'emergency' type topic that students have some familiarity with. Storms, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, blizzards, power outages, etc. all work well.
5. Give the students time to discuss this together. You can circulate and encourage their discussions to go in the direction of problem-solving.
6. Once each group has a plan, have them present it to the rest of the class for discussion. You can take notes on the board to help students with new vocabulary.

Multi-level crossword puzzle:

About nutrition



Word list

food groups:
dairy
fruits
grains
meat
vegetables

meals:
breakfast
lunch
dinner
snack

nutrients:
carbohydrates
fats
minerals
protein
vitamins

ingredients:
alcohol
caffeine
salt
sugar

Level A (easier)

Across clues

1. Carrots, tomatoes, lettuce and broccoli are all _____ .
5. Coffee, tea and many soft drinks (soda pop) have _____ in them.
6. Bread, cereal, rice and noodles are in the _____ group of foods.
7. You can find these nutrients in butter, margarine and oil.
8. Usually people eat this meal at noon.
9. You get these nutrients from rice, bread and other grains.
13. Meat, dried beans and nuts have a lot of this nutrient in them.
15. Milk, yogurt and cheese are all _____ foods.
17. When you eat something small that is not for breakfast, lunch or dinner it's called a _____ .

Down clues

1. These nutrients are called A, B, C, D and E. They are all _____ .
2. This is the morning meal.
3. Potato chips and other snack foods have a lot of _____ in them.
4. These are important nutrients like iron and calcium. They are called _____ .
10. Usually people eat this meal in the evening.
11. Ice cream, candy, cookies and soda pop usually have lots of _____ in them.
12. Apples, oranges, bananas and grapes are all _____ .
14. Chicken, fish, beef and pork are in the _____ group of foods.
16. Beer, wine and whiskey have _____ in them.

"About nutrition" crossword, cont'd

Level B (harder)

Across clues

1. This food group has many foods that are green or orange in color.
5. This ingredient can make you feel nervous. People sometimes use it to stay awake.
6. This food group gives you a lot of fiber and carbohydrates.
7. These nutrients are important, but be careful not to eat too much of them. They are bad for your heart.
8. Some people eat a sandwich or a salad for this meal.
9. These nutrients give you energy and calories. When you eat them, you feel full.
13. This nutrient makes your muscles strong.
15. This food group gives you the important mineral called calcium.
17. This is not a meal but it's extra food you might eat between meals.

Down clues

1. There are 13 of these important nutrients, and they are named for letters of the alphabet.
2. Some people eat only toast and coffee for this meal.
3. This ingredient tastes good but too much of it is bad for people with high blood pressure.
4. These nutrients are in many foods. You need them to grow strong bones and teeth.
10. This is usually the biggest meal people eat in the day.
11. This ingredient tastes good but has a lot of calories and is bad for your teeth.
12. This food group has many foods that taste sweet but they are good for you.
14. This food group gives you protein and fats.
16. This ingredient can slow down your thinking. It is dangerous to use it when you drive a car.

Discussion:
More about nutrition

If your students are unfamiliar with the nutrition terms and concepts in the puzzle above, you may wish to start with a discussion or reading about nutrition first.

Brainstorming

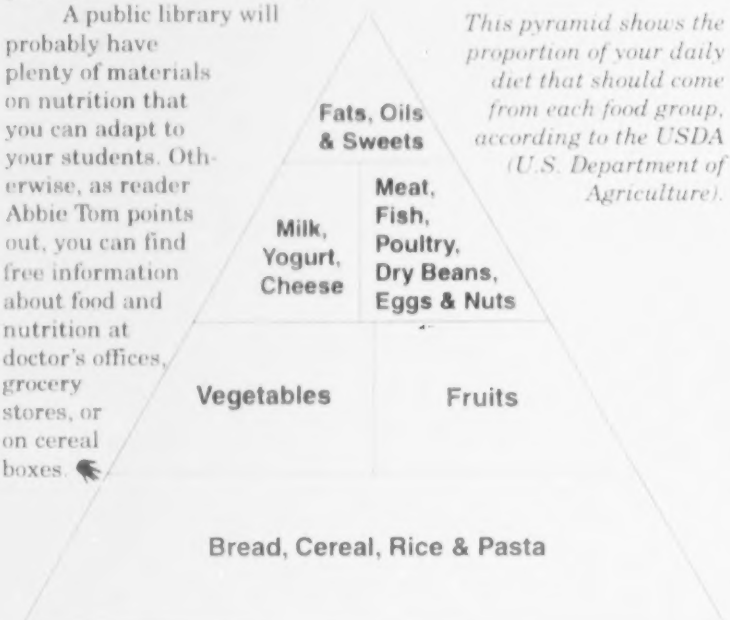
Introduce the Food Guide Pyramid. Have students list the names of as many foods as they can think of, and then group these into the appropriate categories. You can do this together at the blackboard, or have students work in small groups to do this.

Discuss which foods we should eat more of and which foods we should eat less of, according to the pyramid.

Resources

Nancy McKay, Northeast Regional Resource Center in Euclid, Ohio, recommends some adult basic education materials in the "Lifeschool 2000" series published by Globe Fearon. These materials come in binders and are reproducible. The "Health" binder includes a lot of information and activities on nutrition. It costs about $150, but Nancy says it is well worth it. To order, call the publisher at 1-800-877-4283.

A public library will probably have plenty of materials on nutrition that you can adapt to your students. Otherwise, as reader Abbie Tom points out, you can find free information about food and nutrition at doctor's offices, grocery stores, or on cereal boxes.



This pyramid shows the proportion of your daily diet that should come from each food group, according to the USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture).

Reading activity:
"The Truck Got Stuck"

Adapting the story to your students

To adapt this story for beginning students, pre-teach some of the vocabulary such as: truck (pickup, 18-wheeler, delivery), little/medium/big/huge, highway, interstate, overpass.

Also, discuss what happens when a person buys furniture at a store (they deliver). Ask if students have any experience moving furniture, and how they did it.

Discuss measurements buy asking if they can estimate the height of the classroom in feet, then measure to check.

Finally, tell the story using the pictures on the next page to make the meaning clear (you might enlarge them first or put them on an overhead). Have students try to retell the story using the pictures. Then hand out copies of the story below and read together.

For intermediate students, have them rewrite the story, combining sentences with: so, and, but, or, because, so that, which. (See worksheet on p. 11)

The Truck Got Stuck

*This is a true story that comes from **Jan Hervieux** in Pensacola, Florida. She read about it in the newspaper, and re-wrote it for her ESL students.*

1 Raymond is a truck driver. He doesn't drive a little pickup truck. He doesn't drive a huge eighteen-wheeler on the interstate. He drives a medium-size delivery truck.

2 If a person buys a new sofa at a furniture store, the store hires Raymond to deliver the sofa. Raymond drives his truck to the store. Then he puts the new sofa into the delivery truck, and drives to the person's house. Then he puts the new sofa in the person's house.

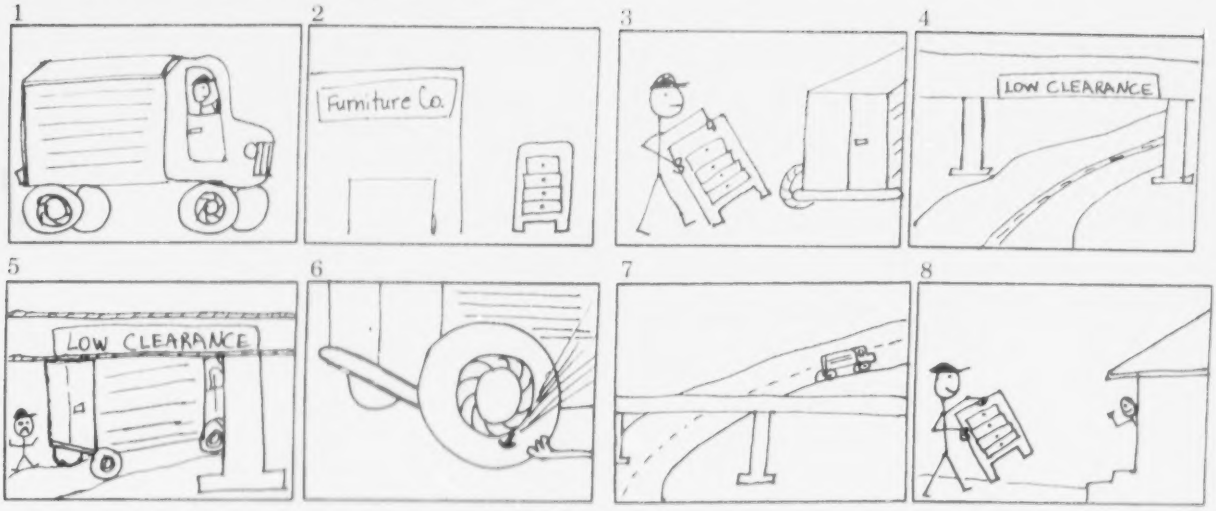
3 One day a store telephoned Raymond. The store asked Raymond to deliver a chest of drawers to a house in Gulf Breeze. Raymond went to the store. He put the chest of drawers into his truck. Then he headed for Gulf Breeze.

4 He went down 17th Avenue. That street has a railroad overpass. A sign on the overpass said, "Low Clearance 10 feet 8 inches." Raymond thought, "My truck isn't 10 feet 8 inches high. My truck can go under the overpass all right."

5 Raymond was wrong. His truck was 10 feet 10 inches high. His truck was two inches too high. His truck got stuck under the overpass. Raymond got out of his truck. He was very embarrassed. He didn't know what to do. Many cars waited to go under the overpass. The drivers blew their horns.

6 Then Raymond got an idea. He knelt down and let some air out of each tire. Then the tires weren't as high. Then the truck wasn't as high. The truck wasn't too high anymore. The truck wasn't stuck anymore. Raymond got into his truck and drove to a service station. He put more air in his tires. Then he drove across the bridge to Gulf Breeze and delivered the chest of drawers.

The Truck Got Stuck



Writing:
Combining sentences

This writing exercise is appropriate for intermediate students, to give them practice in producing fluent writing.

Advanced students can benefit from the same exercise, but without these instructions. Just give them a list of suggested connecting words and let them choose which sentences to combine to improve the story.

The story "The Truck Got Stuck" is written in short, simple sentences. You can re-write the story in more natural English by combining some of these sentences. Use a separate sheet of paper and write the whole story, following these instructions:

In paragraph 1, combine the 2nd and 3rd sentences with *or*.

In paragraph 2, combine the 2nd and 3rd sentence with a comma.

In paragraph 3, combine the 1st and 2nd sentences with *and*. Also combine the 3rd and 4th sentences with *and*.

In paragraph 4, combine the 1st and 2nd sentences with *which*. Also combine the 4th and 5th sentences with *so*.

In paragraph 5, combine the 1st and 2nd sentences with *because*. Also combine the 3rd and 4th sentences with *so*. Then combine the 6th and 7th sentences with *and*.

In paragraph 6, comine the 2nd and 3rd sentences with *so that*. Also combine the 4th, 5th and 6th sentences into one sentence with *and*. Then combine the 7th and 8th sentence with *where*.

Writing:
A multi-level dictation

A dictation gives excellent practice in focussed listening, and this one provides your students with a choice of difficulty levels. Level A is easiest, B is harder and C is hardest, although the most challenging of all would be Level D—just a blank sheet of paper.

This dictation would be a good follow-up activity to the reading on p. 10, as it comes from Jan Hervieux's story, "The Truck Got Stuck", paragraphs 5 and 6.

Before you start, make extra copies of each level, as the students may want to try the dictation more than once, or they may wish to change levels. When finished, have the students help each other to correct their writing. Note that the beginning students have a more complete text, so they can help the advanced students with this!

Level A—The Truck Got Stuck

Raymond's truck was _____ feet _____ inches high. His _____ was _____ inches too high. His _____ got stuck under the overpass. Raymond got out of _____ truck. He was very embarrassed. _____ didn't know what to do. Many _____ waited to go under the overpass. _____ drivers blew their horns.

Then _____ got an idea. He knelt down and let some air _____ of each tire. Then the _____ weren't as high. Then the _____ wasn't as high. The truck wasn't _____ _____ anymore. The truck wasn't _____ anymore. Raymond got _____ his truck and drove _____ a service station. He put more air in his _____. Then he drove _____ the bridge to Gulf Breeze and delivered _____ chest of drawers.

Level B—The Truck Got Stuck

Raymond's truck was 10 _____ 10 _____ high. His truck was _____ _____ too high. His truck got stuck _____ _____ _____ . Raymond _____ _____ _____ his truck. He was _____ embarrassed. He didn't know _____ _____ _____ . Many cars waited _____ _____ _____ the overpass. The drivers _____ _____ horns.

Then Raymond _____ _____ _____ . He knelt down and _____ _____ air _____ _____ each tire. Then the tires weren't _____ high. Then the truck _____ _____ high. The truck wasn't _____ _____ _____ . The truck _____ _____ anymore. Raymond _____ _____ _____ truck and _____ _____ _____ service station. He put more air _____ _____ _____ . Then he _____ _____ _____ _____ to Gulf Breeze and delivered the chest _____ drawers.

Level C—The Truck Got Stuck

Raymond's truck _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____. His truck was _____ _____ _____ _____. His _____ got_____ _____ _____ _____. Raymond _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ . _____ _____ _____ embarrassed. He _____ _____ _____ _____ do. _____ cars _____ to_____ _____ _____ _____ . The drivers _____ _____ _____ .

_____ Raymond _____ _____ _____ . He knelt _____ and _____ _____ _____ out of _____ _____. Then the tires _____ _____ _____. Then the truck _____ _____ _____ . The truck _____ _____ _____ _____. The truck _____ _____ _____. Raymond _____ _____ _____ _____ and _____ _____ _____ service _____ . He _____ more _____ _____ _____ _____ . _____ he _____ _____ _____ _____ to Gulf Breeze and _____ the _____ _____ drawers.

Level D—The Truck Got Stuck

Try writing this dictation on a blank piece of paper!

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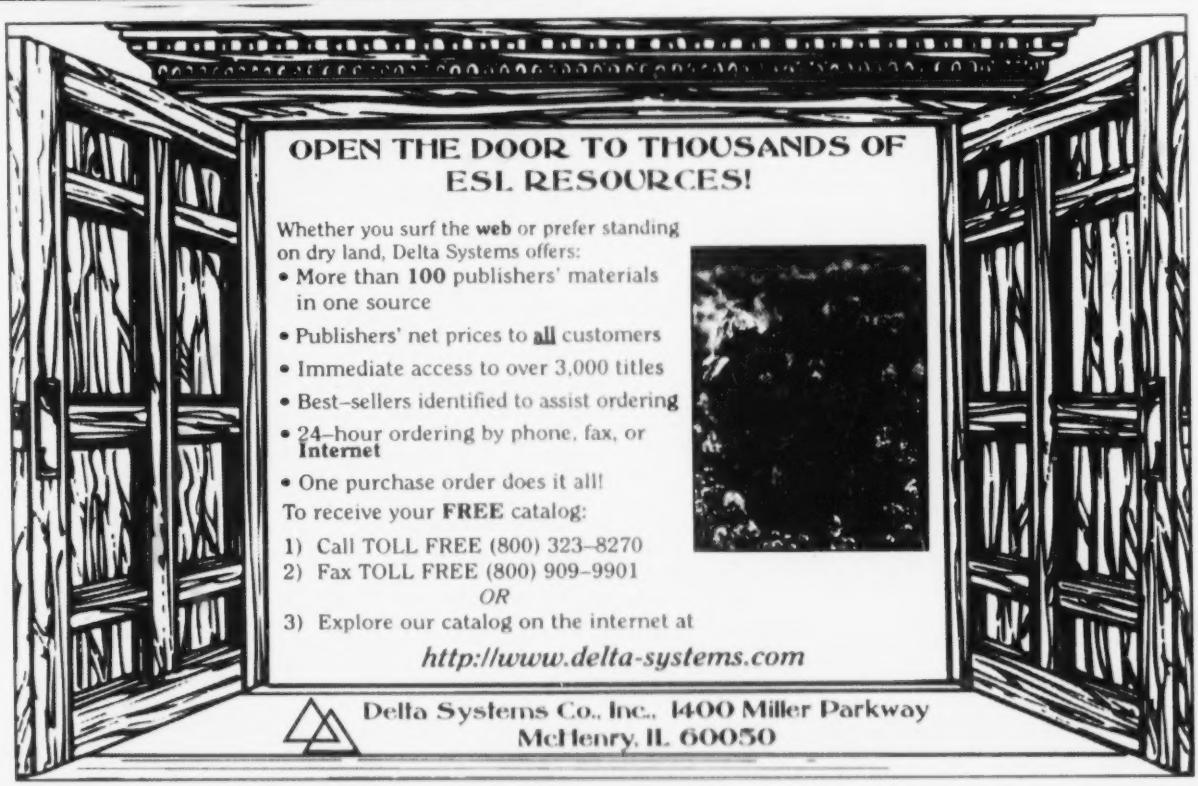
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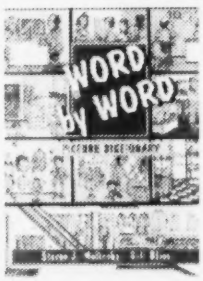

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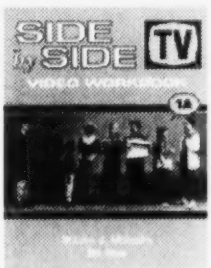

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September/October issue

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Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

Contents:

Letters 3

Minigrant award winner: Cityscape Scavenger Hunt 4

Writing activity: Using smells to inspire writing 6

Multi-level crossword puzzle: Food! 8

ESL game: A guessing game about food 10

Idea file: Homework ideas for beginning ESL students 11

Hints & tips 12

News & notes 13

Editorial:

How to run a program

If you've been reading *Hands-on English* very long, you are probably aware that we are frequently dismayed by the lack of support for teachers of adult ESL. We have seen funding problems, lack of understanding by the public, and lack of moral support within institutions as burdens the adult ESL teacher has to accept.

As we were preparing this issue, though, two examples of especially good 'director-ing' came our way , and we were so impressed that we had to share them with you.

Author's escort

The wonderful article on page 6 about teaching writing with smells was written by a volunteer teacher at the Arlington Education and Employment Program in Arlington, Virginia. The article was submitted to us, though, by her director (or facilitator—we're not sure of her title) Celia Arnade, who had first inquired graciously by email whether we were interested in the article, and had asked about our guidelines. She enclosed a note and her card with the article, which was sent by postal mail, and later checked with us by email to confirm its arrival.

Now, we don't want you to think that all this stuff is necessary—we would have printed the article anyway! But that attention and care demonstrates a supportive relationship to the teacher and to her work that is heartwarming.

Co-conspirators

The other example that caught our attention recently was the director of a workplace program in Chicago, Virginia Trusiak, who is collaborating behind the scenes with the ESL students there to prepare a holiday surprise for the teachers (you can read the details of this project in "Hints & tips" on page 12).

What a wonderful environment, where the program director actually talks with the students, and works with them to show appreciation for the teachers' work! Now, who wouldn't love to work for someone like that? (Sorry, they don't have openings; we checked.)

Grantsmanship

Recently, other examples of good 'director-ing' have come our way. After our Minigrant awards were announced this year, for instance, we received several warm and enthusiastic letters from program directors on behalf of their award-winning teachers.

You may think these are minor matters, but we have only occasionally seen these courtesies before. They show a significant support and an appreciation for the teachers, and a highly professional attitude.

Times a-changin'?

Could it be there's a trend toward better collaboration between teachers and administrators? We don't really know. But while we're considering this, if you have your own example of good 'director-ing,' we'd love to hear about it.

Happy teaching! —the Editor.

Don't forget to check our web site,
http://www.4w.com/hoe/
for the latest current events activity!

Hands-on **English**

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About the publication

Hands-on English has been helping teachers and tutors with practical teaching ideas since 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who taught ESL to adults in many different settings, and is familiar with the fun and the challenges involved.

Our articles and ideas are contributed by experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have an article or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

Who reads H.O.E.?

We thought you might be interested to know what a wide range our readership covers. We have subscribers working with ESL students in:

Refugee programs
Literacy programs
Community colleges
Colleges and universities
Correctional facilities
Resource centers
Adult Education programs
Volunteer tutoring
Intensive ESL programs
Teacher training programs
Religious organizations
Community Education programs
Secondary schools
Workplace education
Language institutes
Libraries . . . .and more!

What do our readers have in common? They are dedicated, they are working under sometimes difficult conditions, and they are looking for practical, adult materials that will help their students learn English.

About our Minigrants program

Hands-on English awards a few small grants (of up to $200 each) annually for practical classroom projects. Applications are due each April 30, and are available upon request.

H.O.E. online

Hands-on English is now on the Web! You can find us at:

www.4w.com/hoe/

There you can:

- See a list of our **back issues** with a description of the articles in each one.
- Read our popular article, "**40 helpful hints & tips** for making your teaching easier and better!"
- Best of all, find a new **current events activity** each month, written expressly for you and your students!
- And if you like, you can **renew** your subscription or order back issues from our online order form.

See you there!

Your editor, Anna Silliman, is always pleased to hear from our readers!

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Letters

...cards, email messages & calls

Game suggestion

In our last issue, a reader from Taiwan asked for some suggestions of commercial games that work with ESL. One reader sent us this idea right away:

"I have found 'The Ungame' to be very useful for non-competitive stimulation of language. Students enjoy learning about each other at a level beyond survival English. The humorous questions are especially fun!

"The Ungame is published by: Talicor, Inc., P. O. Box 6382, Anaheim, CA 92806. It's a board game for under $20. They also have a pocket-sized game for less. Local game stores may already carry this item. You can call 1-800-433-4263 or check their website, http://www.talicor.com/Ungame.htm

"By the way, my ESL department subscribes and sends along your newsletter for staff review. I never fail to find useful ideas. Many activities go into immediate use the same day I receive my copy of H.O.E.! Keep up the good work."

Linda Scantlebury
Shasta College ESL Instructor
Redding, California

Feedback from two readers

"I continue to be impressed by the contents of Hands-on. . . and share it with staff at every meeting. Several teachers have their own subscriptions and college students I work with have a batch to consult, too. Thanks for the STIMULATION."

Jean Hanslin
St. Paul, Minnesota

"Hands-on English provides stimulating activities and ideas for over-worked multi-level teachers of ESL. Thanks to everyone who participates."

Laura Qualls
Chesapeake, Virginia

Editor's note: I'd like to second that 'thank you'! We are so grateful to our readers who take the time to contribute their teaching ideas, their suggestions and their questions. This publication wouldn't be possible without your wonderful input!

Teaching is strenuous

We had a nice phone conversation with Thomas Harkins, ESL teacher in Los Angeles, California. We discussed how totally exhausted a person can feel after teaching—with no energy left for anything else! This seems to be a normal part of doing a good job in the classroom.

Tom pointed out that the kind of planning, preparation, stamina, energy, dedication and attention that teaching requires is hard to describe to anyone who hasn't experienced this. You have to do it to believe it!

The hits just keep on coming

We thought you'd be interested to hear that our *Hands-on English* web site, which has been in place almost three months now, is receiving lots of visitors—several hundred per week—or 2,500 so far. Lots of people have contacted us to say they like the site, and we've heard from several teachers that the current events activity we offer every month is useful.

For **October**, the current events activity is a grammar exercise about the forest fires in Indonesia. For **November**, there's a multi-level dictation about the early winter storm in Nebraska. (You can still get both of these activities.) For **December**, the topic is TBA, which means we don't have the faintest idea yet what the subject will be! Check our web site in early December to find out: http://www.4w.com/hoe/

As always, we enjoy getting your feedback, so let us know if you have any ideas about what else we can do to make your job easier!

Minigrant award winner:

Cityscape Scavenger Hunt

The purpose of this activity was to provide a fun, non-threatening way for students to learn how to follow directions. While doing this, the students also made contact with local offices and facilities that they needed to know about, learned of many resources that are free and available to the public, and gained confidence in navigating the city.

Our class consists of multi-level Hispanic students, both men and women. Ten students participated with perfect attendance in the "Cityscape Scavenger Hunt" during the month of September. Several students began the project, but to qualify for the actual scavenger hunt trip, they had to attend all four class periods prior to that one. The scavenger hunt took place on Saturday, September 27, 1997 under a bright, hot fall sky. A perfect day to end up at a late-season St. Louis Cardinals' baseball game!

Preparation

Many of the students in the class are unable to read and write in either Spanish or English. Students began by learning to give and receive oral and limited written directions. Students practiced giving directions and finding locations based on fellow students' directions. Most of the work was done orally for this multi-level class so that all could participate. Emphasis was placed on learning to recognize certain written words such as right, left, North, South, East and West. Four class periods were used to reinforce this directional learning.

Starting out

On the day of the scavenger hunt, the students had to meet at 8:30 am at the light rail transport station to start their big day. Many of the students were introduced to the transit system for the first time. A map of all Metro Link stops was provided for each student. They also each got a scavenger hunt list along with their transit passes. St. Louis street guide maps were used to help students locate places of interest.

The students were separated into two groups. One group accompanied the teacher, Patti Pagano; the other group accompanied the classroom tutor, Bert Rakers. Each group was given a Polaroid camera and film to take pictures along their routes. Then each group decided where they would begin their search and rode the Metro Link to a beginning location.

Both groups succeeded in visiting 5 different locations. They came away with a new insight into cultural sites, historic sites, and shopping facilities that they had been unaware of when we began. One student commented that she had discovered a market with better selection and prices than her regular one.

Topping it off

After lunch at the Spaghetti Factory, the group went to Busch Stadium where each student was treated to a baseball game ticket. The St. Louis Cardinals were playing the Chicago Cubs. Mark MacGuire, a new St. Louis Cardinal power hitter, hit two home runs that day. One student remarked that it made a perfect day even better.

Many benefits

The results of this activity were to learn directions, which all students accomplished in record time as they knew they only had four class sessions in which to learn the necessary words. They also experienced activities and places they had never seen and would not have ventured to on their own.

This event could have easily been a two day project. We are planning on doing a follow-up activity in the Spring for the students who attended. After the event was over, some students asked to have the pictures of themselves that were taken in St. Louis to send home to family and friends in Mexico. It was a fun activity for everyone—the students, the teacher and the tutors.

*—by **Vickie Cook**, tutor at 'The Reading Link,' adult program at Kaskaskia College in Centralia, Illinois.*

About the Minigrant awards

Hands-on English makes these Minigrant awards annually for innovative ESL teaching projects. Applications for the coming year will be available in January '98, and are due on April 30th.

To receive an application, contact: Hands-on English, P.O. Box 256, Crete, NE 68333 USA. Tel: 402-826-5426 Fax: 402-826-3997 Email: hoe@navix.net

You can read about other award-winning projects at our website: www.4w.com/hoe/

Here's proof that one student, and his group, found the Old Courthouse!

This is the handout the students used for the scavenger hunt.

In order to complete this task, the students had to discuss together how to find unknown places by studying a map, planning a route and asking for directions. It must have given them a great sense of accomplishment when they were finished!

ESL Scavenger Hunt = St. Louis

Below you will find a list of several locations to go to in the St. Louis area. At each location you will have to take a picture of someone in your group at that particular site. Sometimes you will also have to find a piece of information. You will not have time to visit each site listed, so it will be up to your group to plan a route that will allow you to visit as many sites as possible in the amount of time that we have. REMEMBER, we must all meet back at about 11:30 at the Spaghetti Factory for lunch.

1. Find the Old Cathedral and find out when it was built.
2. Find the spot near the foot of the Arch which shows how high the floodwaters of 1993 reached. Record and bring back this information.
3. Find the address #1 Memorial Drive. What TVstation is in that building?
4. Find the zoo and take a picture of the zebras.
5. Find the Old Court House and tell what famous historic case was tried there.
6. Find Soulard Farmer's Market and buy at least one piece of fruit.
7. Find Union Station and take a picture in front of a Mexican restaurant.
8. Find St. Louis Center. Take a picture from the catwalk (walking bridge) between one of the stores and the parking garage.
9. Find a horse drawn carriage on the riverfront and take its picture.
10. Whose statue is in front of Busch Stadium?

REMEMBER, you must take a picture at each site you visit.

GOOD LUCK!!! Which team will visit the most sites???

In addition to the list, the tutors were given this advice for the trip:

Tutors: Allow the students to figure out their own routes and English translations. They should ask for help/directions from the "public" before they ask you. Only step in if they are about to get into trouble. Do allow them to make minor mistakes; this is the best way to learn and remember. Have fun!

Writing activity:

The smell of memory; writing with the nose

In working with students on writing, I've always felt that a primary goal is establishing an *emotional bond* with the new language. When you can express strong personal feeling in the new language, it becomes *your* language, I believe, in a way that surpasses successfully ordering a meal or perhaps even getting a job.

Straight to the heart

There are lots of shortcuts to the emotional bond, but I think that among the most direct are those through the senses and the memories they evoke. I've used the tactile sense—bringing in scraps of velvet and sandpaper—and I've brought in sounds—bagfuls of chimes, rattles, gongs and nailfiles. But the hands-down champion sense for calling up emotional memories that can inspire heartfelt writing is, in my experience, the sense of smell. So the approach described here could be called, "Using the nose to write from the heart."

I bring in samples of herbs and spices, fruits and cleaning solution, coffee and perfumes; pass them around for the students to smell with eyes closed; and then talk about how they make us feel. At the least, and especially with beginning students, this can become a vocabulary enhancer. This is not bad, because just involving a sense not usually used in the classroom enlivens the discussion. But what I try to get is not primarily identification of the smell but a calling up of memories and feelings.

The memory connection

We talk about how smells mean different things to different people; it's a personal connection. I sometimes tell the students about my city-raised friend who hated the smell of freshly cut grass because it reminded him of early morning drills in the Army—that was where he'd first smelled it!

After discussion, we write. I've had wonderful stories about childhood memories of the Ethiopian coffee ceremony; a poem from a young Bolivian man remembering buying violets for his sweetheart on a street corner in November; and a long string of words about cooking in India, inspired by the smell of mint. This last was not very coherent, but it represented a breakthrough for a woman who hadn't been writing at all.

The smell/brain connection

Apparently there's a scientific basis for the special power of smell. Memories evoked by odors really are perceived as more vivid and emotional than those that come to us from sights and sounds, according to material presented by the U.S. Botanical Garden at its spring 1997 exhibit on fragrance. The probable reason lies in the anatomy of the brain. Smell sensations go directly to the olfactory cortex, which is directly "hard-wired" to the organs of the limbic system that are responsible for memory and the emotions. Sensations from the eyes, ears, and fingertips follow a more circuitous route through areas of the cerebral cortex where they are processed into thoughts, ideas and associations before reaching the limbic system. And the powerful evocative capability of odors actually has a name: the 'Proust phenomenon,' after Marcel Proust, the French writer whose memories, evoked by a special kind of cake floating in hot tea, inspired a lengthy and famous novel.

Whatever the scientific theories, the power of smell worked for Proust and can work for ESL writers! *(See the following page for some teaching suggestions.)*

Adapting to different levels

I have used this exercise successfully with high beginning/low intermediate students, and also with multilevel groups of high beginning to advanced students. I plan to try it with low beginning students as well.

This is how I would try adapting it for very low beginning: Everybody sniff and react, identifying smells as "good" or "bad." (With a slightly higher level, add "sweet," "disgusting," and others.) Then work with the model "This makes me feel happy/sad/homesick." Finally, try the model "I remember. . . ." The challenge would be to keep the exercise about communicating memory and feeling, even at this level, rather than just about identifying the smells.

*—by **Gay Hammerman**, Volunteer teacher at the REEP Program in Arlington, Virginia.*

When was the last time you found something totally different to try with your students?? We're delighted to bring you this creative teaching idea that we know many of you will find inspiring!

—Editor

Materials needed:

- Some fragrant materials. These smells have worked well for students:
  - ground cinnamon (recently purchased) and/or freshly broken cinnamon sticks.
  - ground or whole cloves
  - fresh or dried thyme (bruised or crumbled)
  - fresh or dried lavender
  - fresh or dried basil
  - star anise (at Asian groceries; great anise/licorice smell)
  - freshly grated fresh ginger root
  - freshly ground (within a few days and kept in freezer until used) coffee
  - fresh orange peel
  - cleaning solution (like Spic and Span) saturating a cotton ball
  - a specific floral scent, like violet or lily-of-the-valley, saturating a cotton ball
  - (I also plan to try pipe tobacco; I suspect it would evoke my father, and maybe someone else's.)

- Glass jars or food-quality plastic containers (like Rubbermaid) for storing the fragrant materials. You could number these jars for identification. Until recently, though, I have just brought things in their original containers or in sandwich bags, and that worked fine also.

- On the chalkboard, write these model sentence-starters:
  - This smell makes me think of. . .
  - This smell makes me remember. . .
  - The smell of _____ makes me think of. . .
  - The smell of _____ makes me remember. . .

Instructions for students (after discussion):

Choose one smell to write about. Write down the number of your smell.

Choose a smell that makes you remember something you saw in the past, something that happened in the past, a time when you were happy, a time when you were sad.

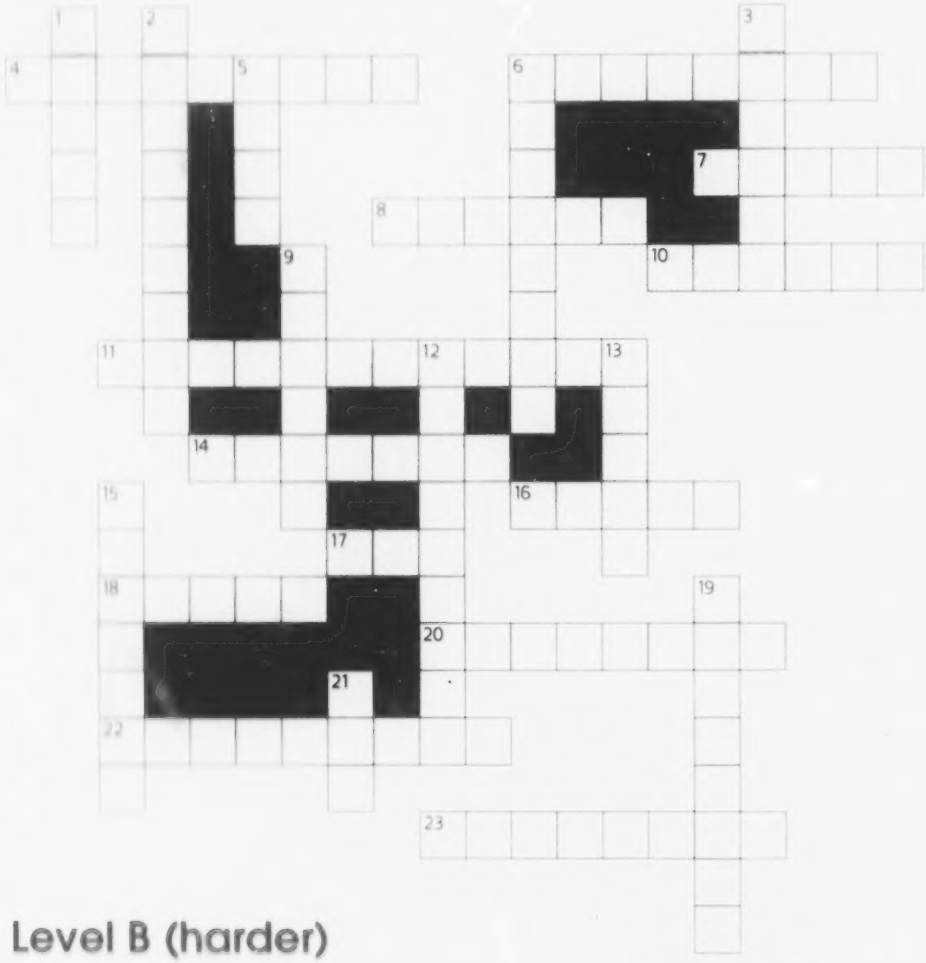
If you want to, you can start with the words, "This smell makes me remember. . . " or "This smell makesme think of. . . " but you don't have to. You can just start writing.

If your memory gets weaker, find your number and smell it again to make the memory stronger.

Editor's note: *If you are passing around any materials that are not edible, please be sure to warn the students not to taste them (sometimes tasting is a natural reaction when trying to identify a smell). On the other hand if the materials are edible (such as herbs and spices) and you don't mind the students tasting them, provide a small dish or clean piece of paper for each student to shake some material out before tasting. Perhaps this will discourage some of those cold & flu germs from spreading!*

Multi-level crossword puzzle:

Food!



Word list

appetizer
breakfast
bread
cheese
coffee
dessert
dinner
fast food
fish
gravy
hamburger
holiday
ice cream
junk food
lunch
margarine
pie
refreshments
salad
sandwich
snack
stuffing
tea
turkey

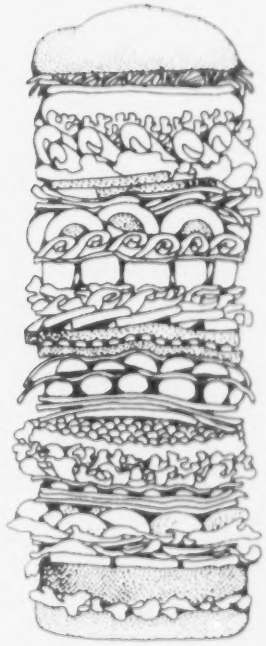
Level B (harder)

Across clues

4. The early meal
6. Meat or cheese with bread
7. You eat this between meals
8. A hot beverage
10. A kind of poultry
11. Treats for visitors
14. You eat this after a meal.
16. A sauce for meat or potatoes.
17. Another hot beverage.
18. The mid-day meal.
20. A cold dessert.
22. Something small you eat before a meal.
23. Popular, but not healthy to eat.

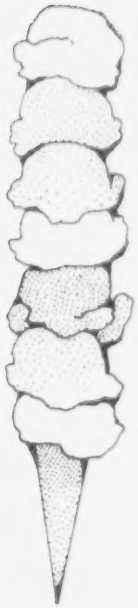
Down clues

1. Made from wheat.
2. A typical fast food.
3. Usually the evening meal.
5. Seafood
6. This is cooked inside a turkey or chicken.
9. A dairy food
12. Tastes like butter.
13. A cold dish of mixed vegetables.
15. Turkey, stuffing and pumpkin pie are _____ food.
19. What you can buy at MacDonald's, Burger King, Wendy's, etc.
21. A dessert made with fruit and pastry.



251

Level A (easier)



Across clues

4. I usually eat _____ at 8:00 a.m.
6. "Would you like to get a hamburger with me for lunch?" "No, thanks. I brought a _____ from home."
7. Something small you eat between meals is called a _____ .
8. "Would you like a cup of _____?" "Sure, if you have decaf."
10. Americans like to eat this big bird for holiday dinners.
11. Our school had a party. The teachers brought coffee and cookies for _____.
14. "For _____ we have pie and ice cream." "Oh, no thank you—I'm full!"
16. "Would you like _____ on your mashed potatoes?" "Yes, please." "Be careful, it's hot!"
17. I don't like coffee, but I like to drink _____.
18. I usually eat _____ at noon.
20. This food is very cold and very sweet.
22. We ate dinner at a Chinese restaurant. Before dinner, we ordered a small _____ for each of us.
23. Potato chips, candy and soda pop are examples of _____ _____ . They taste good, but are not good for your health.

Down clues

1. You can use two pieces of this to make a sandwich.
2. If you go to MacDonald's or Burger King for lunch, you can buy a _____.
3. I usually eat _____ at 6:00 p.m.
5. When I was young, we used to catch _____ in the lake.
6. This food is made with bread and other things. You cook it inside a turkey or chicken.
9. This food has a strong taste and is made from milk. You can put it on a sandwich.
12. Some people like to put this on bread or toast. It tastes like butter.
13. I had a delicious _____ made with lettuce, tomatoes and onion.
15. For a _____ like Thanksgiving or Christmas, many people like to eat turkey.
19. Some people like to eat _____ _____ at a restaurant when they are in a hurry.
21." Have you ever eaten pumpkin _____?" "Yes, I have, but it's too sweet for me."

Note to the instructor:

The holiday season is usually a time when some ESL lessons focus on food. Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas, New Year's, and Chinese New Year celebrations all have special foods associated with them. Often classes share some food or refreshments at this time of year.

This puzzle includes some holiday foods (turkey, stuffing, gravy, pumpkin pie) as well as everyday foods, so it should tie in well with your end-of-the-year activities.

Preparation

Be sure to make plenty of copies of the puzzle, because students often like to try the same puzzle at different levels. For example, a student could try the easy level with the word list for help, then try it again without the word list.

In addition, you'll want to cut apart the puzzle, the word list and the two levels of clues into four pieces. This will make it possible for students to mix and match.

How to do it

Let each student decide which level of the puzzle they'd like to try, and whether they want to try it with the word list or not. When students are finished working on the puzzle, they can check their answers together. Have fun!

ESL games:
"Take two pieces of bread. . ."

A guessing game

Here is a password-style guessing game on the food theme which your students can play in small groups or pairs, perhaps as a warm-up exercise.

Preparation

Make sure the students are familiar with the items below before you begin! If they aren't, you can discuss them or replace some items with other foods the students are familiar with. Then, make enough copies so that each group (or pair) of students has a set of the cards.

How to do it

Each student draws a card, and without telling anyone what the word is, tries to explain how to prepare this food item. For example, a student who draws 'turkey sandwich' might say, "Take two pieces of bread, and put some butter on them. Put a piece of turkey on one, and put some mayonnaise on the other. Put the pieces together and you are ready to eat." The other students have to guess the name of the finished product. (You can give the above example to the class yourself so that everyone understands the game.)

Why it works

It's always good practice to explain something, and a game activity makes it fun to do. Students in a multi-level class can work together on this, because each student will use the language they have available to get their point across.

Do your students say they need more conversation and speaking practice? This activity will give them the perfect opportunity to practice those skills.

turkey sandwich	chicken soup	ice cream sundae
pumpkin pie	onion dip	peanut butter sandwich
pancakes	omelette	pizza
burrito	eggroll	gyros

Idea file:

Homework ideas for beginning students

Many thanks to ***Fiona Armstrong****, ESL teacher in New York City, for suggesting this topic and contributing the 'refrigerator' idea!*

What kind of homework assignments can you give your beginning level students, particularly literacy-level students? Here are some suggestions that provide limited, do-able tasks for them. The ideas are mostly fun, and they should help bring your students in closer contact with the things going on all around them, as well as giving them focussed language practice.

Of course, you can adapt these ideas to suit your students. Many of the TV ideas, for example, would be easy to adapt to a newspaper activity, which you could even do in class. And it wouldn't be hard to make the assignments below more challenging for your intermediate or advanced students, by increasing the number of things they have to look for, for instance.

In case you'd like to use these ideas as is, though, we've presented them for you in reproducible format. Have fun!

Write a list of the items in your refrigerator.
Write the name of three streets that are near the street where you live.
Write the names of four TV stations.
Write the names of three television programs. Which one do you like best?
Write the names of two radio stations (Hint: these names usually have letters and numbers.)
Watch some ads on TV and find the names of three cars that are for sale.
Watch some ads on TV and write the names of four foods you see advertised there.
There are many different kinds of soda pop, like Coca-Cola. Go to a grocery store and see how many names of soft drinks you can find.
Find out what days and what hours the library is open. Also, tell us how you found out.
Find out what days and what hours the post office is open. Also, tell us how you found out.
Find out the low temperature and the high temperature for three different days. Also, tell us where you got this information!
Find out five American names (first names) and how to spell them.
Find a local TV news station that gives a half hour of news every evening. Watch this program and count how many reporters you see in one program. Also, do you know their names?

Hints & tips

Gift idea

Virginia Trusiak, director of a workplace ESL program in Chicago, called recently to order some back issues of *Hands-on English* for her teachers.

She explained that she is collaborating with the students there to design a notebook cover for these issues; the students will do the artwork which will be inserted into the plastic sleeve on the front of a 3-ring binder. Their autographs will be included, and the finished ensemble will be presented to the teachers as a holiday surprise.

What a great idea! Inexpensive and useful, too. (Of course, here in the *Hands-on English* office we're a little biased in favor of this idea. . .)

Literacy-level dictation

For multi-level classes, it can be a challenge to include beginning literacy students in activities the whole group is working on. In our last issue we provided a multi-level dictation with three levels of difficulty—the lowest level text has only a few words missing, the harder levels have more and more words missing and the most challenging level is to write the dictation from scratch on blank paper. This is fine if your students can already read, but what about those who can't?

The problem is solved if the story you are dictating comes with a series of sequential pictures (ours did; see p. 11 of Vol. 7 No. 3). While the other students are writing the dictation, the task of the literacy-level student will be to listen and arrange the pictures in the correct sequence. Once that is done, the student can use the pictures to retell the story orally (or the other students can try this too).

When both the sequence and the content of the story are established, the student can then look at the text. Depending on their ability, they could: circle key words, listen and follow along while someone reads aloud, copy the story (or parts of it), or try reading it aloud themselves. By this time they will have become so familiar with the story that they may be able to make good guesses even on words they don't know.

Hobby talk

Elizabeth Bakker, instructor at Downey Adult School in Downey, California writes:

"I have been an ESL instructor for several years, and have received a positive response from the students in my class when they have had an opportunity to share their hobbies with their classmates. We have been covering a unit on Recreation and Leisure, so I asked students to bring something they like doing in their free time.

"As you can see from the pictures enclosed, many students have exciting hobbies! Some like puzzles; others enjoy making crafts, riding bicycles, reading, or collecting seashells.

"This particular lesson is a great way for students to mingle. We have a group of six students discuss their hobbies for about fifteen minutes. The students change groups until they have discussed their hobbies with the majority of students. I have 40 students, so you can imagine the energy and enthusiasm that is generated from this wonderful lesson! The pictures taken of the students are developed for the next day so we can review their hobbies and put them on poster board. This project is a winner with the students!"

Do you have an ESL tip that works for you? Why not share it with our readers? Teachers and tutors are always looking for new ideas!

These students in Elizabeth's class seem happy to talk about their hobbies!

255

News & notes

Upcoming conference

◆ March 17–21, 1998—**TESOL** annual conference in Seattle, Washington. For information contact TESOL, 1600 Cameron St #300, Alexandria, VA 22314 USA. Phone: 703-836-0774, fax: 703-836-7864, email: conv@tesol.edu or see their web site, http://www.tesol.edu

Up-to-date resource

NCLE (a non-profit organization called theNational Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education) continues to produce information and resource lists for adult ESL practitioners on issues that are important now—such as teaching Citizenship, Workplace ESL, working with volunteers, Family Literacy programs, classroom teaching issues and more. Much of this information is available free.

To receive a list of NCLE publications, send a request to: NCLE, 1118 22nd St NW, Washington, DC 20037-1214. You can also see a complete list of their publications on their web site, and many of their "Digests" can be downloaded free:

http://www.cal.org/ncle

Education funding news

In November, Congress passed and President Clinton signed into law an appropriations bill for education that has many of us breathing a great sigh of relief. It's a good year for education—many programs such as bilingual, immigrant education and literacy received increases; ABE grants to the states were also increased.

The general public supports education and this funding reflects that trend. Adult ESL programs will certainly be strengthened by this move. On the other hand, anti-immigrant and English-only legislation is still being proposed in Congress which could have long-term consequences for our students.

Online opportunities

Two web sites to help you stay in touch with your government are: www.capweb.net, a 'Citizens Guide to the Congress,' and www.piperinfo.com, linking you to state and local government Internet sites. (Thanks to Terry O'Donnell at TESOL for supplying this information.)

On the market

Reviews of useful ESL materials

Teach yourself to teach

"Teaching English as a Foreign or Second Language; A Teacher Self-development and Methodology Guide"
by Jerry G. Gebhard (1996 University of Michigan Press). ISBN 0-472-08231-0 Also available from Delta Systems, 1-800-323-8270, $24.95

This is a book you're going to have to think about—it's not the ready-to-use material for your students that we're so fond of here at *Hands-on English*. But it *is* practical and helpful if you are trying to improve your teaching skills, especially if you haven't had teacher training or TESOL courses. The book is 'jargon-free' enough that anyone can read it.

You'll find concrete ideas on classroom management, promoting student interaction and cultural tips. Techniques for teaching listening, speaking, reading and writing are explored thoughtfully with many examples and helpful anecdotes. Problems that most ESL/EFL teachers experience (students won't talk, etc.) are discussed honestly, and without giving pat answers the author suggests approaches that might help with these problems.

The author clearly enjoys teaching and his fondness for the students and for the process permeates every page. The message we see in this book is that you can trust yourself—both to use your own judgement wisely and to improve your own skills as you go along.

Just in time for New Year's

"The 1998 World Calendar" has a wealth of information about holidays of more than 100 countries, and 5 of the world's major religions. It is so interesting that, frankly, you'll use it even after it goes out of date. $15.95 includes postage, from Educational Extension Systems, P.O. Box 472, Waynesboro, PA 17268. Phone orders 1-800-447-8561.

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Publications

Operations in English; 55 Natural and Logical Sequences for Language Acquisition by Gayle Nelson and Thomas Winters. These pairwork activities, where one student gives instructions and the other follows them, are effective both in building conversation skills and as a game. $12.50 (ISBN 0-86647-074-3)
Pro Lingua Associates 800-366-4775.

Pingo Bingo: Theme based illustrated bingo games created for the ESL classroom. www.pingobingo.com
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237

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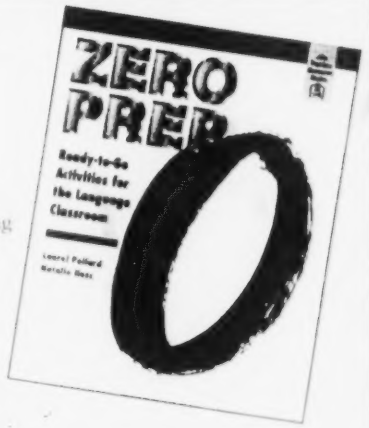

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Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

Contents:

Letters 3

From the field:
A New Year's Quilt 4
More about recruiting 13

Minigrant award winner:
Welcome letters to new students 5

"Soy el maestro!" Students as teachers 12

Reading activity:
The Olympics 6

Grammar grab-bag:
Fill in the verb 7

Multi-level crossword puzzle:
All about shopping 8

Hints & tips: 10

Idea file:
"I have two cats," a conversation activity 11

News & notes 14

Online opportunities:
An adult ed site with ESL lessons 14

Editorial:

How's your teaching going?

Midway through the year is a good time to take a critical look at what's going on in your class, because there's still time to make beneficial changes. When I was teaching, though, I learned that worrying self-consciously about my performance as a teacher made me nervous and didn't necessarily help to improve anything.

Instead, I learned to focus on what the *students* were doing as a measure of how things are going. This is a healthier and more productive approach to critiquing the work in the classroom. Here's my checklist of questions to consider. Give it a try!

Anna's checklist

1. Do your students ask questions?

If they do, it's a good sign they are in a comfortable working relationship with you. If they don't, are they perhaps feeling intimidated? Try giving them an alternative way to ask things, like writing questions on a piece of paper for you to answer, or writing questions on the board before you come in. Interviews, in which students ask each other questions, can help build confidence too.

2. Do they ask questions you don't expect?

If they do, it's a good sign that the content of the lesson is interesting, real and has some depth to it. Unexpected questions make the discussion more exciting—if you never hear a surprising question, look for material that is a little more challenging or find topics that are open-ended and require some speculating to talk about (i.e., life on other planets, etc.) Personal stories usually generate interesting questions, too.

3. Do your students try to participate or answer, even if they aren't sure?

Some risk-taking by your students is usually a good sign that they are trying hard to learn, and that they know it's OK to make mistakes. To encourage experimenting, pick some questions no one can know the answer to and practice "guessing." Also, you can have your students work cooperatively on some activities—this decreases the 'risk' to individuals and creates a more comfortable problem-solving atmosphere.

4. Is your classroom often noisy?

Occasional chaos is a good sign that there's something interesting going on! It also releases tension and helps students to relax and speak more naturally. If your class is too stiff and quiet, bring in a mixer-type activity that gets students moving around and talking, even for ten minutes of each class.

5. Do the students seem involved and interested during class?

This doesn't necessarily mean noise but could also be intent listening. This is a good sign that learning is going on. If a student seems bored, try to find out more about his or her goals—maybe you can re-focus the class work on what that student wants to learn. Another approach is to give the uninvolved student some responsibility—leading a group or checking other students' papers, for example. Giving all students a chance to voice their opinions, on current events for instance, gets them involved too.

6. Are your students pleased with their own progress?

If so, that's a sign that you and the students have set realistic goals. Learning a new language can be frustrating because it's such an immense task. If your students feel discouraged, take some time to look back at what's been accomplished already. They are likely learning more than they realize.

Happy teaching! —the Editor

Hands-on **English**

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About the publication

Hands-on English has been helping teachers and tutors with practical teaching ideas since 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who taught ESL to adults in many different settings, and is familiar with the fun and the challenges involved.

Our articles and ideas are contributed by experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have an article or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

Who reads H.O.E.?

We thought you might be interested to know what a wide range our readership covers. We have subscribers working with ESL students in: Refugee programs, Literacy programs, Community colleges, Colleges and universities, Correctional facilities, Resource centers, Adult Education programs, Volunteer tutoring, Intensive ESL programs, Teacher training programs, Religious organizations, Community Education programs, Secondary schools, Workplace education, Language institutes, Libraries . . . .and more!

What do our readers have in common? They are dedicated, they are working under sometimes difficult conditions, and they are looking for practical, adult materials that will help their students learn English.

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Letters

...cards, email messages & calls

'Smells' article feedback

"I was, as always, delighted with the last issue, and particularly enjoyed the article, "The smell of memory: writing with the nose" [Vol. 7, No. 4, p. 6]. It immediately reminded me of a little activity I did with a class of pre-literate Hmong women where we compiled a language-experience booklet of their favorite things. Kaying Vang 'wrote': *When I hear the songs of birds, my heart flies away to Laos.* I keep it above my desk to remind me of what beginners can do!"

—Shirley Brod
Spring Institute ESL Project
Boulder, Colorado

"Re: Smelling activities—Did you know film processing stores often have empty 35mm canisters for free? Teachers can use them for smelly materials. A few nail holes in the lid to release the smell and teachers have a compact, non-breakable smell container!"

—Stephina Brewer
Phoenix, Arizona

Speaking out for tutors

"I am the coordinator of an adult literacy/volunteer program in the Northwest suburbs of Chicago. Although the program was originally conceived as a service for native English speakers, due to the demographics nearly 95% of our students are ESL students. We utilize volunteer totors in a one-to-one setting. . .

"I have subscribed to *Hands-on English* for several years and frequently pass on activities to my Site Supervisors. It would be helpful if you published more activities which can be used by a tutor with his/her student rather than classroom activities. For example, in the last issue, the game "Take two pieces of bread . . ." [p. 10] is excellent for a tutor/student pair to use. Thank you for a great publication!

—Katie Anderson, READ TO LEARN
Arlington Heights, Illinois

"As a volunteer tutor for the Charlotte County ESL program, I find *Hands-on English* quite helpful, but wish that you would include more activities and ideas for teaching in a one-on-one situation. I usually work with a single student at a time for usually an hour and a half, once a week, so anything that you could suggest to make that time more interesting, even though it's without the interplay with other students, would be very appreciated. Keep up the good work!

—Sylvia Goodman
Englewood, Florida

As you can see from the above two letters, there is quite a need for individual-type exercises and activities. We do try to present activities that can be used in multiple environments—in this issue, for example, the puzzle on shopping and the reading and grammar exercise on the Olympics would work fine with an individual student. On the other hand, many of the other activities in this issue are intended to be group projects.

Can any instructors or tutors out there offer some more ideas for working with one student? There's always a need for more good ideas, and we'd be delighted to hear from you if you've found something that works. Thanks!

Needs world maps

Marsha Rogne is looking for up-to-date world maps to use with her students, but her program doesn't have a lot of funds. Any ideas on how or where she can get some good maps on a budget? Let us know!

"When I hear the sound of birds, my heart flies away to Laos." —Kaying Vang

From the field:
A New Year's Quilt

Here's an interesting new idea for a way to help your students get to know each other better while pulling them together as a class at the same time.

Origins of the idea

Because December 1 was World AIDS Day, my class had a few discussions about AIDS. I wanted to follow up with some sort of project. I decided to use the AIDS Quilt theme that many communities have developed, although not to use it to remember AIDS victims, but to establish a unity within my intermediate ESL class. After brainstorming and finally voting on a theme, the class decided to use the theme of "New Years' Goals and Dreams."

Putting it together

Each student was given a square of white paper on which he or she had to design a picture reflecting a personal New Years' dream with a sentence or two to explain it. The sentence writing requirement calls for some amount of literacy, which was difficult for some of the students. Of course one's name had to appear on the square as well.

After the students planned where they would put their picture, sentence and name, the white square was mounted onto a slightly larger colored square of paper. Then a committee of students taped the squares together. (My goal is eventually to laminate the quilt to protect it.)

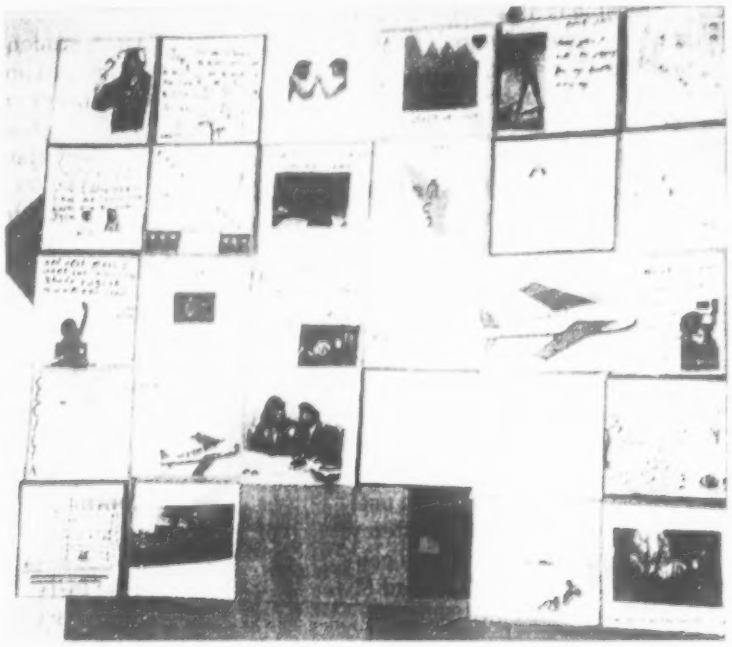
Why it works

I like this project because as new students enter the class, they have the option of adding their own square to the quilt, affirming their identity with the class. And, when students leave for any reason, they have the option to remove a square to have it as a remembrance of their ESL class experience.

When we completed the Quilt project, we reflected on the task—what made a square particularly good, and how to improve upon the task, if we were ever to do a similar project. The main suggestion was to better plan the layout of the squares.

I hope that some of the *Hands-on English* readers will be able to adapt this idea to their own personal situations.

—by ***Marilyn Kwithin****, Plainview, New York.*



"Next year I will. . .

start my own business."

Minigrant award winner:

Welcome letters to new students

—by ***Patricia Sanna Jody***, *English Language Institute, University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida*

Students beginning an intensive language program frequently experience overwhelming homesickness and disorientation. Their low-level speaking skills often make it difficult to form friendships and support systems at first. The letters created in this project are intended to help ease their way to cultural adjustment.

Setting up the project

Ten students, all in an intensive English program Level I class, participated in this project. They came from such diverse cultures as Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, Japan, Korea and Puerto Rico.

The project was the prelude for a lesson on the post office and types of letters (e.g. business and friendly). We began the project by discussing the various cultural adjustments these students were having to make. We examined their frustrations, problems, and possible solutions. We further discussed what issues new students would have to deal with.

It was suggested that "welcome letters" might help the new students to adjust more readily. So, we set about writing these letters to the new, and as yet unknown, incoming Level I students.

Creative work

The current students were provided with scissors, construction paper, stickers, markers, colored pens, stencils, rubber stamps, glue and glitter with which to prepare and decorate their letters. Polaroid snapshots were taken of each student to affix to his or her letter.

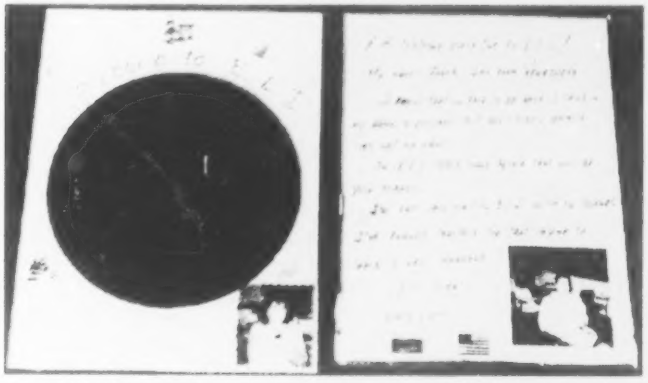
The finished product was laminated to protect and preserve it. The students worked during class time (5 one-hour sessions) on their vocabulary skills, writing skills, and counseling skills to produce their letters of welcome and advice.

The students really appreciated this project. They took the time to comment to the teacher about how much this project helped *them* to adjust as well as how much they enjoyed trying to help others to adjust. They were also relieved to discover that they did not have to be artists in order to produce an attractive and meaningful letter. The one anticipated problem, that members of the same language group would resort to their first language, did happen, although it was kept to a minimum during production. (Students were permitted to use their native language for brief messages on the welcome letters.)

What's next

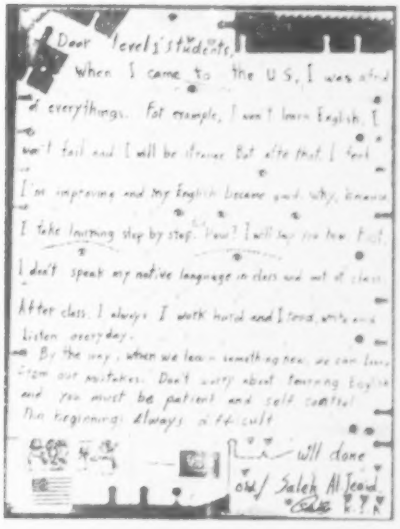
The teacher is hoping to bring some of the letter writers into contact with the new Level I students at the start of the new semester. The goal is to foster a sense of camaraderie and support.

"Never give up. I hope you will be successful in your plan."



"In E.L.I. there are many people that will be your friends."

"Don't worry about learning English. The beginning is always difficult."


Dear level 1 students,
When I came to the U.S, I was afraid of everythings. For example, I won't learn English. I won't fail and I will be diffrent. But after that I feel I'm improving and my English became good. why, because I take learning step by step. How? I will tell you how. First, I don't speak my native language in class and out of class. After class I always I work hard and I read, write and listen everyday. By the way, when we learn something new, we can learn from our mistakes. Don't worry about learning English and you must be patient and self control. The beginning always is difficult
will done
Abd/ Saleh Al Jeaid

"Don't be afraid of learning English. The harder you study, the easier your lessons will become. Gradually, you will be fine."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Reading activity:
The Olympics

—by ***Jan Hervieux***, *Pensacola, Florida.*

Jan often 'writes down to level' the current news for her students.

Every four years athletes from all the countries in the world go to a special place. They compete to see who is the best in the world.

The Olympic games began in ancient Greece. When it is the year for the Olympics, an athlete goes to Greece and lights a torch. He runs ten miles with the torch. Then he gives the torch to another runner. This happens again and again. Finally, a runner takes the torch to the place for the Olympics. There is a big celebration when the torch comes to the place.

There are summer Olympics and winter Olympics. Now we are watching the winter Olympics. The special place this year is in Nagano, Japan. Some of the sports for the winter Olympics are speed skating (speed skating is very fast), figure skating (figure skating is very pretty), down hill skiing, cross-country skiing, ski jumping and hockey.

The three winners get medals. The best athlete gets a gold medal. The second gets a silver medal. The third gets a bronze medal.

The symbol of the Olympics is five rings, for the five different regions of the world (Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and Oceana). One ring is black, one is green, one is yellow, one is red, and one is blue. The rings touch each other. This is a symbol that all athletes are friends.

The last summer Olympic games were in 1996 in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. The next summer games will be in 2000 in Sydney, Australia. In the summer Olympics we see swimming, diving, jumping and running.

Discussion

Do you like to watch the Olympics? Why or why not?
Which winter sport do you enjoy watching the most?
Which summer sport do you enjoy watching the most?
Do you play a sport? Which sports do you enjoy playing?
If you could be an Olympic athlete, which sport would you choose? Why?
Why do you think people enjoy playing sports?
Why do you think people enjoy watching sports?
Why do you think athletes want to be in the Olympics?

Grammar grab-bag:
Fill in the verb

Instructions:
First, read the story on page 6. Then look at this worksheet and try to write the missing verbs in the blanks.

Verb list:
be, is, are, was, were
begin, began
come, comes
compete, competes
get, gets
give, gives
go, goes
light, lights
run, runs
see, sees
take, takes
watch, watching

The Olympics

Every four years athletes from all the countries in the world _____ to a special place. They _____ to see who _____ the best in the world.

The Olympic games _____ in ancient Greece. When it is the year for the Olympics, an athlete _____ to Greece and _____ a torch. He _____ ten miles with the torch. Then he _____ the torch to another runner. This happens again and again. Finally, a runner _____ the torch to the place for the Olympics. There is a big celebration when the torch _____ to the place.

There _____ summer Olympics and winter Olympics. Now we are _____ the winter Olympics. The special place this year _____ in Nagano, Japan. Some of the sports for the winter Olympics _____ speed skating (speed skating _____ very fast), figure skating (figure skating _____ very pretty), down hill skiing, cross-country skiing, ski jumping and hockey.

The three winners _____ medals. The best athlete _____ a gold medal. The second _____ a silver medal. The third _____ a bronze medal.

The symbol of the Olympics _____ five rings, for the five different regions of the world (Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and Oceana). One ring _____ black, one _____ green, one _____ yellow, one _____ red, and one _____ blue. The rings touch each other. This is a symbol that all athletes _____ friends.

The last summer Olympic games _____ in 1996 in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. The next summer games will _____ in 2000 in Sydney, Australia. In the summer Olympics we _____ swimming, diving, jumping and running.

Look it up!

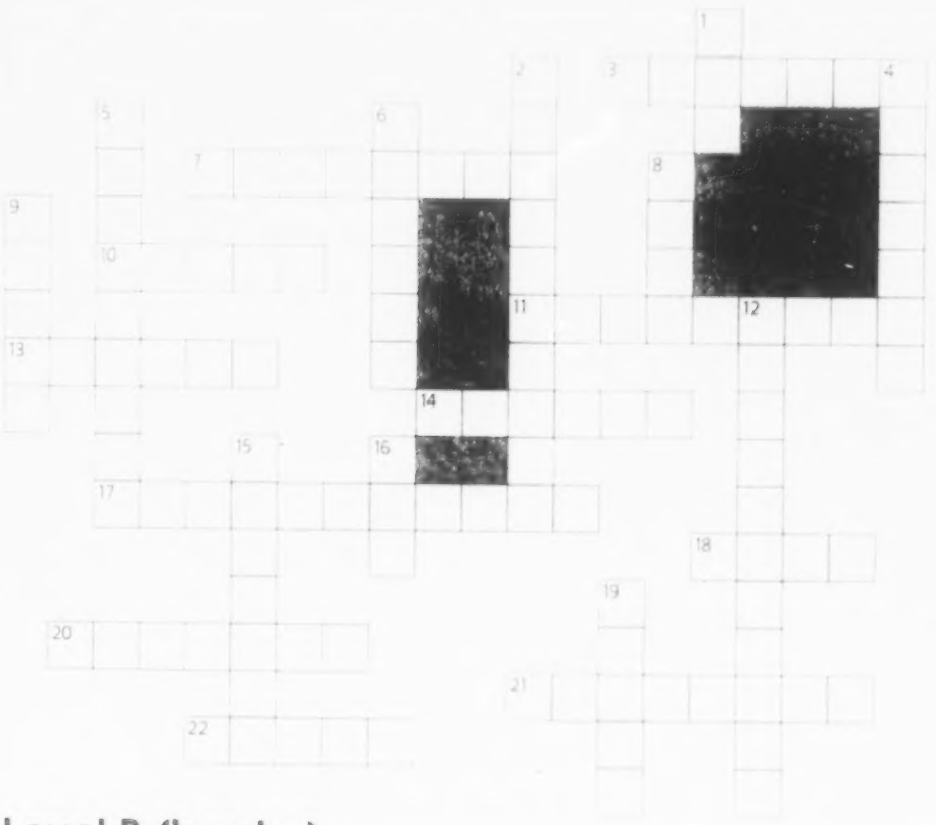
Find out more

Look in the newspaper, read a magazine, watch TV or read online to find the answers to these questions:

1. What are the other winter sports?
2. How many visitors came to Nagano, Japan this year?
3. How many different countries have athletes at the Olympics this year?
4. Where are the next winter games? In what year?
5. If the Olympic games are every four years, why do we have games in the years 1996, 1998, 2000, and 2002?
6. Where were the first modern Olympics held? In what year?

Multi-level crossword puzzle:

All about shopping



Word list

aisle
bought
buy
change
cheap
coupons
customer
date
expensive
garage sale
groceries
larger
looking
pay
receipt
shopping
shoplifting
size
smaller
store
style
supermarket

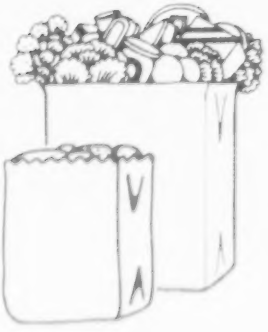
Level B (harder)

Across clues

3. You can save money on groceries if you look for _____ in the newspaper.
7. A person who buys something at a store is a _____.
10. It doesn't cost very much; it's _____.
11. The opposite of cheap.
13. The opposite of smaller.
14. The money you get back after you pay for something is your _____.
17. A _____ is sometimes also called a grocery store.
18. What _____ shoes do you wear?
20. "Window shopping" means you are only _____, not buying.
21. If you want to buy something, you have to go _____.
22. I like that kind of shirt. It's a very nice _____.

Down clues

1. "To purchase" means to _____ something.
2. You can buy second-hand clothes and other used things at a _____.
4. If that jacket is too big, you need a _____ one.
5. Another word for food items.
6. Past tense of 'buy.'
8. To see if that milk is fresh, check the _____.
9. In the supermarket you can usually find salt in the same _____ as flour and sugar. They are together.
12. This word means stealing something from a store.
15. This paper shows what you bought and how much it cost.
16. You can _____ by check or with cash.
19. A place to buy things.



Level A (easier)

Across clues

3. I bought $24 worth of groceries, but I had some _____ for some things, so I only paid $21.50.

7. "Excuse me, do you work here?" "No, I don't. I'm a _____." "Oh, I'm sorry. I though you were a sales clerk."

10. I like to shop at this store. Everything costs less here. The prices are very _____.

11. I don't like to shop at that store. Everything costs more there. The prices are very _____.

13. Joe: "Do you like this jacket?" Fred: "Yes, I do, but it's too small. You need a _____ one."

14. Store clerk: "That's $7.98 out of ten . . $2.02 is your _____." Customer: "Thank you."

17. Every week I go to the _____ to buy food for my family.

18. "These shoes are too big. Do you have them in a smaller _____?"

20. Clerk: "Can I help you find something?" Customer: "No, thank you. I'm just _____."

21. Marie: "I need to buy a birthday present for my sister. Do you want to go _____ with me?" Tanya: "O.K., let's go to the mall."

22. Sue: "What do you think of this dress?" Mia: "Well, I like the color but I don't like the _____. It's not very fashionable."

Down clues

1. My brother is going to _____ a car. He needs it to drive to work.

2. My neighbors are having a big _____ _____ on Saturday. Three families will sell their old furniture and other things.

4. Customer: "I like this coat, but it's too big for me. Do you have it in a _____ size?" Clerk: "Yes, I think so."

5. First neighbor: "I'm going to the supermarket to buy some _____. Do you need anything?" Second neighbor: "No, thanks. I went shopping yesterday, so I'm all set."

6. Yesterday I _____ three books at the library book sale.

8. Don't forget to check the _____ on milk and on meat, so you know it's fresh.

9. Customer: "Excuse me, where can I find the sugar?" Clerk: "It's in _____ seven, with the flour and baking things." Customer: "Thanks!"

12. Two men were caught _____ at a department store. They tried to steal a TV, but the clerk saw them.

15. Customer: "I'd like to return these jeans, please." Clerk: "Do you have the _____?" Customer: "Yes, it's right here. I bought them yesterday but they're too small."

16. Customer: "Can I _____ for this here?" Clerk: "No, you have to take it to the register at the front of the store."

19. Juan: "Where are you going?" Jose: I have to go to the _____ to get some milk for the children." Juan: "Great! I'll come with you."

Note to the instructor:

Preparation

Make lots of copies of this puzzle, with the puzzle grid, the clues and the word list all on separate pages (you can just cut them apart if you want). Now you are ready to mix and match.

How to do it

Have each student decide whether they want to try the easy level or the harder one, and whether they'd like the word list for help or not. Hand out the appropriate parts to each student.

If the students finish one level, they may like to try again with the other level, so have extra copies ready.

Discussion topic

We once had two students accused of shoplifting; since then we've decided it's a good idea to talk with new arrivals about the importance of keeping your sales receipt to avoid this (and also to make returns if necessary).

Hints & tips

Interactive crosswords

Linda Gianoulis in Monticello, Minnesota writes: "I have used the multi-level crossword puzzles on a number of occasions, but I decided to turn the one on food (Nov/Dec 97) into an 'information gap' activity. The students share the information in order to solve the puzzle. Here's what I did:

Preparation: Divide the class into two groups. Make a copy of the blank crossword puzzle (minus word list and clues) for each student. Select one level of the clues, and make copies of a *portion* of the clues for each group—for example, "across" clues for one group and "down" clues for the other group. Also prepare some copies of the word list to have on hand.

Procedure: Distribute the blank puzzles to all students. Distribute the "across" clues to Group 1, and the "down" clues to Group 2. You might also decide to distribute the word list to each group. Then, the groups take turns giving their clues and allowing the other group to provide the answer. Encourage students to ask for clarification from one another.

Follow-up: You can collect all the materials and start over, this time using the *other* level of clues, with or without the word list. As a variation, you can also do this activity with pairs of students."

Editor's note: *We like this idea, because it brings some discussion and negotiation, and also more fun, into the process of 'working a crossword puzzle!' It also involves speaking and listening as well as reading and writing skills.*

Taping talk radio programs

Roger Converse emailed us this one from Philadelphia:

"I have used taped radio programs with my students. Talk show hosts often have one or two minute conversations with their callers which are in everyday, normal American English. I have my students listen to a short conversation as I note which idioms were used. Then I ask them to tell me what the conversation was about. I read the idioms aloud and we talk about them. Then I play the conversation again. The topics are interesting, depending on what program you use. I like to use Dr. Laura Slessinger, a national talk show host with an entertaining daily talk show out of Atlanta. (She's a family and marriage counselor who gives advice about people's personal problems.) The students really enjoy it and it is good listening practice."

A guessing game

Dianne E. Scott sends us this activity she and her students have developed:

"We call this activity 'Famous People, Places and Things.' The students and the teacher brainstorm the names of famous people and list them according to category, like actors, writers, politicians, etc. We also include a 'local' category which might be teachers' or aides' names, or a custodian in the building, etc.

"The students prepare by writing all of these names on small sheets of paper, folded up and placed in a box at the front of the room. Then, a student volunteer chooses one piece of paper and proceeds to tell the class one thing about the person. If they want to, they can even pantomime something. The other students try to guess who it is.

"We seldom have a class when everyone doesn't participate at least once. Everyone is involved in some way, either copying names or writing on the board, etc. We use all kinds of variations on the theme—you can use countries, based on student origins, a holiday theme, etc. I like this activity as it involves vocabulary review, writing, acting, thinking and doing something away from the student's desk."

Editor's note: *This activity is useful for multi-level classes, as each student can participate at their own level.*

"This person was born in Poland, but he doesn't live there now. Who is he?"

Do you have an ESL idea that works for you? Why not share it with our readers? Teachers and tutors are always looking for new ideas!

...continued next page

"Hints & tips," continued . . .

Do-it-yourself reading comprehension

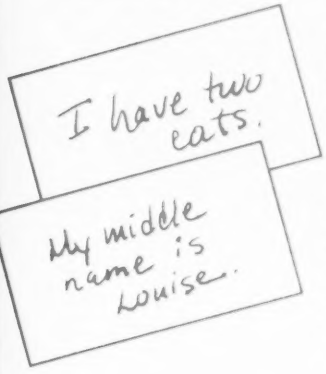
Linda Holden, in Gurnee, Illinois, writes to us that she is working on finding ways to have her students take charge of their own learning. She says:

"When my students are working with a reading, I used to just have them use whatever reading comprehension questions were provided with the text. Now I do what I call "Do-it-yourself" reading comprehension. After my students have read a text, I ask them to think of what is important in the text. What do you think somebody should know or remember about this article when they're done reading it? Then I give them index cards and have them write a question they think is important on the front side. On the back side, they're to write not only the answer, but also the paragraph where the answer can be found in the text (the number of the paragraph). Then they get up and walk around and ask each other their questions. If any student thinks the answer or information is wrong, or that they have perhaps misunderstood something, they both go to the text and check it out.

"The questions the students generate are usually much more interesting than the ones provided by the publisher. And they get the added benefit of being actively involved with the text, and with selecting the aspects of the text that are most important to them."

Idea file: "I have two cats."

Here's an easy-to-prepare activity you can keep on file for one of those days when you need an idea in a hurry!



A conversation activity

Here's a fun mixer activity that you can do in about 20 minutes of class time and that doesn't take much preparation. All you need are some blank cards (or pieces of paper).

Ask the students to write something about themselves on a card that they think most of the other students don't know. Show an example on the board such as "My middle name is Louise," or "I have two cats." Give any assistance they need in order to write their cards, but keep the information secret!

Put all of the cards into a box, or a hat if you have one, and mix them up. Each student draws a card and then tries to discover who that person is by asking as many students about it as necessary. For example, you might ask, "What is your middle name?" to find the person who wrote the Louise card.

For beginning students especially, you might want to first take some time to help the students formulate a question, and write the question if necessary. Then they can proceed to interview the other students.

The room will be noisy while all the students are busy asking each other questions. When they have found their answer, you can have each student report aloud to the class what they discovered.

Variation

For more advanced students, it might be more fun to have each student write two or three different cards. Have them draw one at a time from the box, and when they've found the answer they can draw another one.

Why it works

This is a short version of an old ESL standby activity called "Find someone who. . ." (we wrote about this one in Vol. 6, No. 1, p. 12). In the original version, the teacher prepares a whole sheet of questions ahead of time and the students try to find all the answers. This is a fun activity, but requires a fair amount of preparation, and the teacher has to know quite a bit about the students to come up with the questions. Also, if some students are absent the day of the activity, some of the questions can't be solved.

In contrast, the questions for this version are prepared on the spot by the students, so all the cards are relevant. This version can be made longer or shorter depending on how many cards the students write, so you can adjust it to meet the needs of that day. Finally, (we love this) in this version even the teacher doesn't know the answers.

270

Minigrant award winner:
Students as teachers/Soy el maestro!

—*by* ***Carol Wertz*** *and* ***Cathy Scarr****, Basic English as a Second Language Program, Shasta College, Shasta Lake, California*

We designed this project to give each student the opportunity to teach a lesson, demonstrating a skill or talent for their classmates. To give the students the idea of what we were expecting, we demonstrated two sample lessons. One was very simple—a folding and cutting paper project, and the other was a more involved craft project which showed students how to plan for materials and create a budget. Next we brainstormed as a class a list of possible presentations. Students then added to the list by thinking of special skills unique to them to choose from.

This was definitely the hardest part of the project—students were reluctant to commit to something they thought they could teach. They finally made a decision the night we said, "Nobody leaves the room until you have chosen a project!" Once they made the decision, there was a change and the seeds of confidence had taken root. We were amazed at the originality of the projects and pleased to see how the choices suited each particular student.

Decision in hand, students proceeded to learn new vocabulary related to their skill and plan the lesson they would teach. They thought through and wrote sequential steps for the presentation. They also had to consider what materials were needed and how much they would cost. We gave them a limited budget to work with and they had to stay within those guidelines.

The first project presented was how to rope (you should have seen us all out in the courtyard lassoing the trash can!) Ezequiel also brought a beautiful saddle from Mexico and explained the different parts and how they are used. The other projects were: knitting, making a Christmas ornament from a clothespin, doing card tricks, making decorative lamps from plastic cups, making salsa and tortillas, cooking chicken mole, putting together potato salad, knot tying, and crafting a Halloween decoration. The projects were each videotaped and viewed in part by the students afterwards.

This project turned out to be valuable in more ways than we had even anticipated. The obvious benefit was that students learned they had talents to share and could communicate them in English! They tremendously enjoyed learning more about each other, from each other. Though they were nervous when presenting their own project, even the shyest student was able to follow through with his plan. They were exceptionally responsive and encouraging to each other which set the stage for building confidence. We saw visible growth in the students' self esteem and the pride they exhibited while teaching.

Some of the unexpected benefits to the students came when things didn't go according to plan. In one instance, a student was frustrated that another student was not following his direction, but it was an excellent opportunity for him to learn that teachers' directions must be clear. Another student forgot to bring measuring cups for her mole, but with a smile, simply approximated the amount in her hand.

We instructed them that everyone needed to participate in each project and some of the men were hesitant when it came to cooking or knitting, but once they got "into" the project, they were surprised how much they enjoyed it.

One lesson for us was realizing the value of asking people to "stretch," and the wonderful feeling of accomplishment that accompanies that growth. We were thrilled with the results of this project and the positive benefits and growth for the students!

From the field:
More about recruiting

—*contributed by* ***Claire Russell****, Educational Coordinator at La Comunidad Hispana in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania.*

In our September/October issue (Vol. 7, No. 3, p. 4) we published some suggestions from two readers about recruiting new students for your program. Here are some more good ideas!

Media savvy

First, never underestimate the usefulness of the press. Almost everywhere there's a local newspaper, and often also free ones that are delivered in bulk to every mailbox in an area. Creating a basic press release introducing your agency and its services can often get you not only mentioned in the community calendar section, but occasionally also interviewed for press stories. And don't forget foreign-language newspapers. Even if you don't have the language skills to translate your class schedule for them, local foreign-language papers are eager for class information and often are willing to translate it for you.

Cable is also valuable. Most cable stations have a channel for advertising, and the majority offer free ads to non-profits. A basic ad about your classes in one or several languages can get a lot of response.

Spreading the word

I regularly get phone calls from native English speakers looking for classes for an English-learning friend or employee, so I started promoting classes to these folks. I make flyers in English that start with, "Do you know someone who wants to learn English?" and hang them around the area, especially on the free advertising boards that supermarkets offer. They get quite a response.

School districts can be useful in disseminating information. Often your local district may have programs you are not aware of, like Even Start and Migrant Education. ESL teachers in the schools are usually more than happy to send home flyers with children for their parents, and sometimes they can do this in the parents' native language. While it may take some persistence in finding the right connections for class promotion, it will pay off in time.

In addition, network, network, network! Take advantage of any and every opportunity to attend relevant meetings where you can present yourself and class information. Often your friendly face at a function will mean the difference between someone recommending your program or passing you over.

Try to join up with other providers of educational and social services. I am a member of a consortium of adult education providers throughout our county, and we collaborate and support each other in a number of ways. This includes referring clients back and forth for appropriate services, which obviously means more students in classes.

Students are key

Maureen Maher wrote about this in the last issue, and I can't stress it enough—your students are an invaluable resource. We generally find that in our established classes, over half of our new students found out about our classes by word of mouth.

Have students recruit for you! If one student invites another, and they come in pairs, groups or entire families, your class numbers can grow exponentially. When we started a new class recently, I explained to the students that we needed a good number of people in the class to satisfy our funders and keep the class going. I encouraged them to give flyers out to people they know who want to learn English, and to invite those people to class. Giving the students ownership and responsibility in recruiting other students can have amazing results. It not only helps increase the numbers, but we find it improves attendance as well.

Where are they coming from?

Finally, anyone in marketing can tell you that the best way to find out what marketing tools work is *asking* your market! Whenever we register a new student for classes, we ask how they found out about classes, as specifically as possible. If someone tells us he learned about us from a flyer, we ask where he saw the flyer. If a student says her employer told her about the class, we find out where she works. Once you learn where people find out about your classes it's very easy to target your recruiting efforts.

News & notes

Upcoming conferences

- February 21, 1998—**Hawai'i TESOL** conference in Laie, Hawai'i. Contact: Brent Green, tel. 808-293-3358 or email greenb@byuh.edu.
- March 17–21, 1998—**TESOL** annual conference in Seattle, Washington. For information contact TESOL, 1600 Cameron St #300, Alexandria, VA 22314 USA. Phone: 703-836-0774, fax: 703-836-7864, email: conv@tesol.edu or see their web site, http://www.tesol.edu
- April 2–4, 1998—**Tennessee TESOL**
- April 3, 1998—**Louisiana TESOL**
- April 3–4, 1998—**Illinois TESOL**
- April 23–26, 1998—**California TESOL** in Pasadena, California
- April 25, 1998—**Eastern Pennsylvania TESOL** in Philadelphia, PA
- May 20–21, 1998—**New Jersey TESOL/New Jersey Bilingual Educators (NJTESOL/BE** annual spring conference at Brunswick Hilton and Towers, East Brunswick, NJ. Contact: Judy O'Loughlin 1-800-953-2375.

For more info on any of the above conferences you can visit the TESOL web site, www.tesol.edu.

Are you going to Seattle?

If you're planning to attend the TESOL conference in Seattle, Washington, you might just run in to your *Hands-on English* editor there! Anna Silliman hopes to be there March 18th through the 22nd. Although we don't have a booth in the exhibit hall, Sheryl Lee of **Realia Kits** has graciously offered to be a contact person for us there. So, stop by Sheryl's booth, see her display of teaching tools, and say "hi" to Anna if she's there! (Best time 11 to 2.)

Minigrant applications for the 1998 awards are now available! Contact *Hands-on English* for an application packet. Deadline is April 30.

Online opportunities

http://humanities.byu.edu/elc/teacher/teacherguidemain

Adult Education ESL Teachers Guide, written and Produced by C. Ray Graham and Mark M. Walsh, Adult Education Center, Texas A&I University, Kingsville, Texas

Designed as a "survival guide for newly assigned teachers," this site begins with a basic orientation to the unique traits of adult ESL students including life experience, motivation, immediate goals and self concept. The next three sections contain ESL lessons and teacher training modules for the beginning, intermediate and pre-literacy levels. The ESL lessons are meant for inexperienced teachers.

Some of the lesson topics for beginning students include greetings, filling out forms, telling time and visiting the doctor. Intermediate lessons include asking directions, shopping for groceries, personal problems and idioms. And the final section on working with non-literate adults has lesson ideas on topics such as roll call, reading road signs, naming letters and consonant sounds. Pretty nice huh?

But wait! There's more! In addition to the lesson ideas, the site offers us ESL teachers a collection of black-line diagrams to be used with many of the lessons. As an example of images available, Beginning Lesson #6, 'Finding a Job," includes drawings of a secretary taking shorthand, a person cleaning a yard, a person selling clothes, a clerk in department store and much more.

Finally, there's a section on creating and using 'Cloze activities' (short reading passages with some words omitted).

Shopping lessons

By the way, if your students are doing the puzzle on shopping in this issue of ***Hands-on English***, you may want to follow this up with one of the lessons from this web site. For beginners, there's "Shopping for Clothes" and for intermediates "Shopping for Groceries." Both units include a sample dialog your students can practice, some vocabulary exercises and drawings to go along with them.

Don't forget H.O.E.!

The new *Hands-on English* web site has a current events activity ***new*** each month which you might be able to use with your students. See: http://www.4w.com/hoe. For early February we are planning a lesson on the Olympics.

*—This article was contributed by **Jack Bailey**, ESL teacher in Santa Barbara, California.*

If you come across other web sites that might be of interest to ESL instructors, please share your discoveries with Jack at jbailey@west.net Also, check out his web site with more links for ESL teachers at http://www.west.net/~jbailey/

Advertising

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Publications

Discovery Trail; a versatile question-and -answer game for ESL/EFL. A board game that provides a context for cooperation and language practice among students. Includes 5 question-card sets (on grammar, prepositions and proverbs) instructions and markers for up to 8 students. $35. (ISBN 0-86647-060-3) This game is also available as a double-board kit (up to 16 students) or as a Quiz Card Game. Extra question-card sets also available. Call for more information.
Pro Lingua Associates 800-366-4775.

Back issues are available for *Hands-on English* at $5 apiece. To see a description of each issue, go to our web site at www.4w.com/hoe or contact us for a printed list.

***Hands-on English* six-year index** to our first six volumes (1991–1997) available for $2.50 per copy. See page 2 for Hands-on English contact information.

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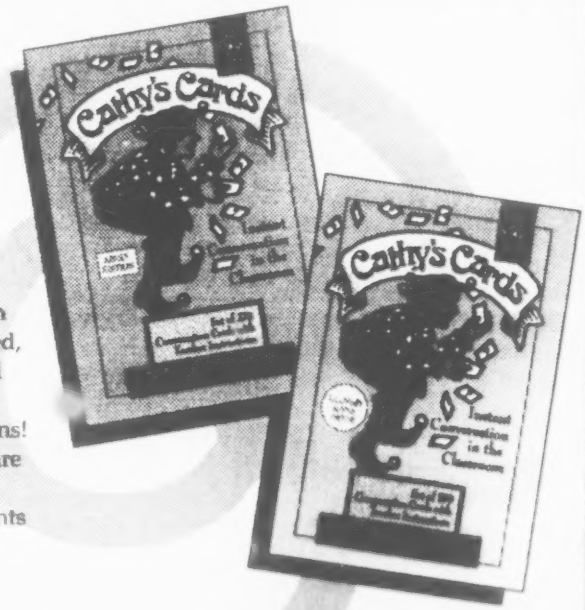

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Hands-on English

A periodical for teachers and tutors of adult English as a second language

Contents:

Letters 3

Hints & tips: 3

Minigrant award winner:
An ESL Book Cart 4

From the field:
A real newspaper column for new readers 6

Multi-level crossword puzzle:
Fixing things 8

Vocabulary exercise:
Fixing things 10

Tools & techniques:
All the newsprint that's fit to use! 11

Using film media:
The Red Balloon 12

Idea file:
Make a categories word game 13

Editorial:
What your students know

When I was a new ESL teacher working with some Hmong refugees (this was a number of years ago), I first encountered the challenge of teaching ESL to students with low literacy skills. My previous teaching had been with college students, or educated immigrants. The students and I both struggled with this unfamiliar class work.

One day I was helping to prepare for a birthday celebration before class by whipping cream with a blender. One of the students watched intently as I did this, and I wondered why he was so fascinated. When I switched off the machine he said to me quietly, "If that motor breaks, I can fix it for you."

Further discussion revealed that he as well as several of the other students in the class knew a lot about how electric motors work; much more than I, in fact. I was humbled by the realization that their lack of book skills did not equate to a lack of other skills or of sophistication.

In fact, the image that I had gathered of these peoples' background (supposedly simple mountain folk??) was totally false, or at the very least much outdated. Naturally I would be the first to say we should avoid stereotypes, yet when you don't know someone well it's easier to fall into stereotyping than you might think.

It's also too easy for a teacher, eager to teach and who naturally enjoys explaining things to people, to fall into the trap of feeling like an expert in everything.

As I got to know the students better, I learned that several of them spoke two or three other languages besides their first language. One student could read and write in the Thai language (a script I had never seen before). In fact, a number of them had basic literacy skills in another language—their apparent 'non-literacy' was partly lack of familiarity with English. This is something that a more experienced teacher would have figured out from the beginning.

I realized that I had been much too shy about getting to know my students, as people and as learners. In the future I would ask many, many more questions of students I was unfamiliar with.

"I can fix it for you..."

That one startling phrase from my student, "I can fix it for you..." has stayed in my mind ever since, like a whisper in my ear, always reminding me that our students have knowledge and experience we don't know about. Since then I try to see students as fellow adults who might teach *me* something, and I try to give them plenty of opportunities to do so.

In this issue, you'll find several activities on the topic of fixing things—two puzzles, a writing activity, and several speaking activities, plus a vocabulary matching exercise for review. We hope these activities will give you a chance to find out something of what *your* students know!

Happy teaching! —the Editor.

Hands-on **English**

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About the publication

Hands-on English has been helping teachers and tutors with practical teaching ideas since 1991. The editor is a former ESL teacher who taught ESL to adults in many different settings, and is familiar with the fun and the challenges involved.

Our articles and ideas are contributed by experienced teachers and tutors, including our readers. If you have an article or teaching suggestion you would like to share, we welcome your input!

Who reads H.O.E.?

We thought you might be interested to know what a wide range our readership covers. We have subscribers working with ESL students in: Refugee programs, Literacy programs, Community colleges, Colleges and universities, Correctional facilities, Resource centers, Adult Education programs, Volunteer tutoring, Intensive ESL programs, Teacher training programs, Religious organizations, Community Education programs, Secondary schools, Workplace education, Language institutes, Libraries . . . and more!

What do our readers have in common? They are dedicated, they are working under sometimes difficult conditions, and they are looking for practical, adult materials that will help their students learn English.

Our editorial policy, re: advertising

We are pleased to bring you advertisements from high-quality publishers in the field, as this is a good source of information on available materials. At the same time we'd like our readers to know that ads bring us only 3% of our operating funds; our main source of income is subscriptions. You, our subscribers, are the reason we exist and we are accountable primarily to you.

About our Minigrants program

Hands-on English awards a few small grants (of up to $200 each) annually for practical classroom projects. Applications are due each April 30, and are available upon request.

H.O.E. online

Hands-on English is now on the Web! You can find us at:

www.4w.com/hoe

Be sure to see the **current events activity** there each month, written expressly for you and your students!

See you there!

Your editor, Anna Silliman, is always pleased to hear from our readers!

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Letters

...cards, email messages & calls

Pleased on the plains

"Everything in your paper is helpful! I especially like the multi-level exercises. I can use them with so many different students. Thanks for your efforts!"

—Leah Ritchie, ESL Instructor
Hastings Literacy Program,
Hastings, Nebraska

Thanks for your feedback—we had to print this one because we like hearing from fellow Nebraskans!

Multi-level fan

"Keep doing what you're doing. I like the activities that show how they can be used at the different levels of proficiency, as most groups are multi-level. Thanks!"

—Eileen Rehg
Dayton, Ohio

Yes—lots of readers tell us they need multi-level ideas, so if anyone has activities that work for this, please share them!

Connection problems?

One reader contacted us to let us know she wasn't able to get to our web site. We'll work with her to see if the problem can be solved. If anyone else has experienced a problem, don't hesitate to let us know.

Our web site is now averaging 75 users a day! We think this is great. Don't forget, there's a current events activity there every month that you might be able to use with your students. Stop by and see at:

http://www.4w.com/hoe/

Testing, testing, testing

"Our teachers have used many of your ideas. I appreciated the publishers' addresses [Vol. 7, No. 2] and online information. We could use articles on assessment."

—Francis Tanaka
Centralia, Washington

Assessment and testing have always been a problem in this field, and are even more so now. We will try to address this in a future issue. Input, anyone?? Thanks!

Hints & tips

Getting to know you

Patty Mertz, a tutor in Hilton Head, South Carolina, contributes this suggestion: "Students bring pictures of family members and then 'introduce' them (i.e., 'This is my sister and her husband...'). Of course, the teacher starts it off by showing *her* relatives (the ice breaker)."

Picture card game

"I bought a game called "Memory Match." It's got cards with words and pictures of opposites (hot-cold, above-below, wet-dry) and is meant to be played like 'Jeopardy.' We've done that a time or two, but often I leave the cards face up and have the students pair them, then make sentences, talk about them, etc. This is non-competitive, of course, and seems to help the students relax and have fun.

"The game is: *Word Opposites: Memory Match*, A Frank Schaffer publication (FS-2204). I got it at a teacher/kids supply store, but I'll bet toy stores would also have it. Well worth the investment."

—Diane Ernst
Gillette, Wyoming

Editor's note: We checked for "Frank Schaffer Publications" on the Web and found that they have a web site under construction so you may be able to find them there soon. Also, many K–12 distributors seem to carry their products.

Conversation card game

Jean Smith, director and tutor trainer at Laubach Literacy center in Solana Beach, California, writes:

"In answer to your request for games, especially for advanced students, I'd suggest 'Scruples.' When I was in Cuernavaca this summer studying Spanish, we played 'Escrupolos,' the español equivalent, in conversation classes.

"You can get this game at most stores that sell games. It consists of cards that describe a human situation, and cards for each player that say 'Agree', 'Disagree' and 'Depends'. The card describing the situation also contains a possible solution. For example, 'You see your best friend's boyfriend out on a date with another woman. You decide to tell her.' The player has to choose one of the three cards and explain why. In my Spanish classes, I found this amusing and challenging."

Minigrant award winner:

An ESL Book Cart

The purpose of the ESL Book Cart project is to encourage students to read for pleasure by allowing them to select a book from a cart that travels from class to class one day each week. Students have 30 to 45 minutes of in-class reading time per week and are expected to spend additional time reading at home.

Each student keeps a reading log of the books he or she has read and also fills out an index card with a brief (20 to 30 words) reaction to each book (see below). Every four weeks or so, students have "book talks"—small group discussions in which they give positive or negative reviews about the books they've been reading.

We used the grant money (and additional funds from our Adult Literacy program) to purchase more than 100 books, most of which are guided readers with controlled vocabulary, designed specifically for adult ESL students.

Publishers with the widest variety of ESL readers include Heinemann (available through Delta Systems at 800-323-8270), Longman Classics (800-552-2259), New Readers Press (800-448-8878), Oxford Bookworms (800-451-7556) and Longman and Penguin Readers (overseas publications available only through Booklink at 201-947-3471). We've also found several good biographies in the young readers' section of local bookstores (see the list of books and publishers, next page).

We then grouped the books into one of six levels according to the number of vocabulary words, and assigned a color to each level as follows:

yellow — 300 to 600 words
orange — 500 to 750 words
green — 900 to 1250 words
white — 1300 to 1500 words
red — 1600 to 1800 words
blue — 2000+ words

The books are arranged on our lovely 6-shelf book cart, and students check out a book by writing their name on a book card in the back of the book, just as we used to do at the library in the days before bar-coding. Students are allowed to choose a book from any color category, but I encourage everyone to try a yellow or orange book at first to ease them into the pleasure-reading process. (Many, many thanks to Tom Richards and Andrea Poulos at the University of Minnesota's ESL reading lab for their wonderful suggestions about books and color coding!)

The results of the project are just what I'd hoped for. Students are doing a lot of reading, and their confidence in their reading ability seems to be growing. They enjoy writing their book "reviews" and talking with other students about the books they're reading. Our hope for next year is to expand the "book cart" concept to our other sites in Minneapolis. If enough funding is available, we'd like to buy more books for the cart so that students at lower levels can participate, too.

This form is taped to one side of a 3" x 5" index card. Students write additional comments on the opposite side.

Book Cart Book Report Your name: _____

Title of the book: _____
Reading level of the book (color): _____
Please circle *one* only:

A. I liked this book
B. I thought this book was just O.K.
C. I didn't enjoy this book.

On the other side, please explain why you circled A, B, or C. Write **20 words** or more.

Some sample book reviews from students (unedited):

Dangerous Journey (yellow)—"This was the first time I read English book. This book was easy for me, but it was the first step to help me read English books. Some sentences in this book were fun. It made me laugh."

New York (yellow)—"I like this book because it tell me a lot of information I didn't know before. Now, I know history of New York."

Meet Martin Luther King, Jr. (green)—"I like this book because it was a good way for every people who live in the U.S. or poor people to have freedom and everybody love each other. I think Martin Luther King, Jr. very good person, and he must fought any way for

These book review cards are kept on file with the book cart, for other students to read.

*—by **Beth Easter**, Lehmann Adult Basic Education Center, Minneapolis Public Schools, Minneapolis, Minnesota*

"An ESL Book Cart," cont'd

us to get a good life. I never forgot about him until the last day of my life."

Forrest Gump (green)—"It was a very interesting story and I want to give him (Forrest Gump) a applause. He was really a clever man but not an idiot."

Meet Me in Istanbul (red)—"This book is a proper book for me. But not very interesting for me because as I read the first page, I could predict this story and my prediction has come true. Have fun with this book."

Finally, the best review of all:

Gone with the Wind [abridged version] (red)—"A woman is a woman. At last she had no lover."

Below we reproduce for you Beth's book list, grouped by the level categories that she and her colleaques devised. The letter code after each title is the publisher (see key at the bottom of the page).

Yellow (300-600 words)
Meet George Washington (RH)
Meet Abraham Lincoln (RH)
Anna and the Fighter (HGR)
Dangerous Journey (HGR)
Dear Jan - Love Ruth (HGR)
The Garden (HGR)
The House on the Hill (HGR)
The Long Tunnel (HGR)
Rich Man, Poor Man (HGR)
This is New York (HGR)
This is San Francisco (HGR)
The Truth Machine (HGR)
The Coldest Place on Earth (OXB)
The Elephant Man (OXB)
Love or Money (OXB)
One-Way Ticket (OXB)
The President's Murderer (OXB)
Under the Moon (OXB)
White Death (OXB)

Green (900 - 1250 words)
A Christmas Carol (LC)
Round the World in 80 Days (LC)
Cleverest Person in the World (HGR)
Escape and Other Stories (HGR)
The Lost World (HGR)
Chemical Secret (OXB)
The Man with No Name (HGR)
The Promise (HGR)
Room 13 and Other Stories (HGR)
The Stranger (HGR)
The Woman in Black (HGR)
Cowboys in Alaska (CM)
Meet Martin Luther King, Jr. (RH)
Forrest Gump (PR)
Madame Doubtfire (PR)
The Fugitive (PR)
Rain Man (PR)

Red (1600 - 1800 words)
Banker (HGR)
The Beautiful & the Damned (HGR)
Case of the Lonely Lady (HGR)
The Diamond Hunters (HGR)
Dracula (HGR)
The Eye of the Tiger (HGR)
Meet Me in Istanbul (HGR)
The Moon is Down (HGR)
Old Mali and the Boy (HGR)
The Pearl (HGR)
Shane (HGR)
The Smuggler (HGR)
Tales of Goha (HGR)
A Town Like Alice (HGR)
Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (LC)
3 Great Plays of Shakespeare (LC)
Wuthering Heights (LC)
White Fang (PR)
Gone with the Wind (PR)
Pride and Prejudice

Orange (500–750 words)
Dead Man's Island (OXB)
Earrings from Frankfurt (OXB)
Grace Darling (OXB)
Sherlock Holmes Short Stories (OXB)
Voodoo Island (OXB)
The Kite Flyer (NRP)
Talk Like a Cowboy (NRP)
Love Stories (NRP)
Adventures of Sinbad the Sailor (LC)
Alice in Wonderland (LC)
Five Famous Fairy Tales (LC)
Heidi (LC)
The Jungle Book (LC)
Robin Hood (LC)
Tales from Hans C. Anderson (LC)
The Silver Elephant (CM)
Whales Can Sing (CM)
American Homes (L)
American Customs and Traditions (L)
American Music (L)
Americans at School (L)
Wild America (L)

White (1300 - 1500 words)
Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (OXB)
A Sucker for Redheads (NRP)
Set to Explode (NRP)
What's the Verdict (NRP)
Riding High (NRP)
The Healing Touch (NRP)
The Lady and the Cowboy (NRP)
A Friend in Need (NRP)
Along the Gold Rush Trail (NRP)
Ben's Gift (NRP)
The Freedom Side (NRP)
Last Chance for Freedom (NRP)
The Island of Truth (CM)
Jimmy Carter: Beyond Presidency (CP)
Helen Keller (SB)

Blue (2000+ words)
Jackie K. Onassis (LP)
The Kennedys (MMI)
Poe's Tales of Mystery (WSI)
The Firm (PR)
The Thorn Birds (PR)
Benjamin Franklin (SS)
Cesar Chavez (SS)
Franklin D. Roosevelt (SS)
Harriet Tubman (SS)
Henry Ford (SS)
Jackie Robinson (SS)
Theodore Roosevelt (ss)
Thomas Jefferson (SS)
George Washington (SS)
Abraham Lincoln (SS)
Booker T. Washington (SS)
Susan B. Anthony (SS)

Publishers: Collier-MacMillan (CM); Children's Press (CP); Heinemann Guided Readers (HGR); Longman (L); Longman Classics (LC); Lerner Publications (LP); Maxwell Macmillan International (MMI); New Readers Press (NRP); Oxford Bookworrms (OXB); Penguin Readers (PR); Random House (RH); Scholastic Books (SB); Simon and Shuster (SS); and Waldman & Sons, Inc. (WSI).

From the field:

A newspaper column for new readers

In 1990, our LVA staff began writing a news column for new readers published in the local community paper, *The Baytown Sun*. The goal was to rewrite local news stories so that students in our literacy program could "read the news" in a real newspaper.

We are fortunate in that the local paper is a strong, pro-active supporter of literacy programs in the community. *The Baytown Sun* allows us to rewrite stories printed in the paper without copyright violation. *The Sun* then runs these stories in a special column called "Literacy Lifeline." This is done as a community service and without a fee.

Each column includes three stories from the previous week's daily papers, abridged and simplified to a third grade level (using the Gunning-Fog index as a gauge). Because the "Lifeline" column appears in a standard newspaper written for the general population, it provides the new reader with a sense of accomplishment. It also helps update the literacy student on the local news and eases the transition to reading standard newspaper copy.

Target population

Our program currently serves over forty students in our one-to-one tutoring program at the library, another sixty in our inter-generational Families Learning Together program held at two local churches, and six in our Workplace Literacy program. The majority of our students are native Spanish speakers. The program serves readers from level 0 to level 5. The level used in the "Lifeline" column is 3.0–3.9, making it accessible to nearly half of our students. The goal is to write a column a new reader could read without outside assistance.

Story guidelines

We limit each story to ten sentences in length. Each sentence is ten words or less. To ease the strain of reading, we include many shorter sentences. Vocabulary is geared toward ESL learners whose native language is Spanish. Three syllable words are avoided when possible.

Article selection is based on several criteria. Timeliness is an important consideration. Any news item involving a deadline that will close before we are printed cannot be used. We avoid very confusing or controversial issues that would be difficult to adequately cover within the ten sentence format.

Most stories require editing for content and some content is usually sacrificed for the sake of brevity. It may be that only one or two critical points of a story can be covered. Local news is preferred to state or federal news as it is more immediately relevant to our readers. Community information—health, education, safety—and human interest stories are usually good choices. The local crime report also lends itself well to a rewritten story.

Teaching applications

For each story, we also create a list of study questions for internal use by our volunteer tutors and class instructors. Each story is accompanied by two comprehension questions and a discussion question. The discussion question might also be used to generate a language experience exercise. As with any reading material, other exercises such as sentence scrambling and cloze can be used to reinforce vocabulary and check comprehension.

The "Lifeline" column lends itself to a multi-level exercise. Lower level students work on reading and vocabulary and answer the study questions orally. Intermediate students write their answers to the study questions.

The most advanced students complete their written responses, then read the original news articles from which the "Lifeline" column was derived. They can concentrate on new vocabulary since they already have a good idea of the article's content. They are encouraged to try this independently, using a dictionary to look up unfamiliar words, with additional help from the instructor or from other students.

*—by **Kerry Ann Gardner**, Literacy Specialist, Literacy Volunteers of America / Sterling Municipal Library, Baytown, Texas.*

Editor's note: This article may inspire you to try 'writing down' news stories for you own students. We hope it may also inspire people to consider working with their local newspaper on projects that will involve or benefit their students.

Here is an example of the beginning and end of the process—the first article was the original one written by Baytown Sun *journalist, Jeff Haddon. The second article is the "Lifeline" write-down and its study questions.*

The original article

The Baytown Sun, 23 March 1997 p. 1-A

Spring has arrived on the Gulf coast. Budding flowers, light showers and mosquitoes. With all the recent rain in baytown, areas that can create breeding grounds for mosquitoes have increased.

Because of that, the city's Mosquito Control division will be investigating breeding sites around the city for the next few days.

"Anyplace with standing water is a possible breeding ground," John Scrader, director of the division said.

He and members of his team will be going throughout the city checking on areas that have had serious insect complaints.

"We'll be conducting several inspections this weekend," he said. Two mobile home parks, backyards and several ditches are on the division's checklist for the inspections.

The director said the inspectors check areas to find mosquito larvae. If larvae are found, the inspectors make recommendations to the property owners.

"The most effective control is to eliminate areas where they breed," Scrader said.

He said improving drainage on property, emptying standing water, clearing debris and mowing grass are some of the ways to reduce the mosquito population.

The "Literacy Lifeline" version

Spring has come to the Gulf Coast. Spring rains bring mosquitoes. Baytown Mosquito Control workers are busy. These workers are checking places for mosquitoes. They look for standing water. This is water that does not move. Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water.

Get rid of standing water in your yard. There are other ways to lower the number of mosquitoes. Keeping your grass mowed is one way.

Study questions:

1. Which workers are busy?

2. Why does standing water bring mosquitoes?

3. How would you fix the mosquito problem?

This is the weekly column as it appears in print. What a great way to help connect students to community events!

Spring rains bring droves of mosquitoes to Baytown

Literacy Lifeline looks at the previous week's news. It is written for new readers.

March 23

Spring has come to the Gulf Coast. Spring rains bring mosquitoes. Baytown Mosquito Control workers are busy. These workers are checking places for mosquitoes. They look for standing water. This is water that does not run. Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water.

Get rid of standing water in your yard. There are other ways to lower the number of mosquitoes. Keeping your grass mowed is one way.

March 23

The local Hispanic Chamber of Commerce will have a fiesta. This is for the Cinco de Mayo. Part of the fiesta will be a band and dancing. The fiesta and dance are on May 3rd. This will be at the Pasadena Convention Center.

The fiesta will show Hispanic culture. The fiesta and dance will also raise money. Some money

LITERACY LIFELINE

By Kerry Ann Gardner

will help people go to college. Call 422-6908 to buy tickets. Ask for Ronda.

March 23

Eddie Gray is citizen of the Year. He won this honor from the Baytown Sun. He has worked 30 years to make our city better. He has done this in many ways.

He has been a leader in protecting nature. Gray worked to improve the Goose Creek Stream area. He helped make parks and jogging trails. He helped create the Baytown Nature Center. Now Gray wants to start a wetlands education center. He does these things for free.

Gray has been an oil man. He is now a land developer. He has lived in Baytown almost 60 years.

Multi-level crossword puzzle:

Fixing things

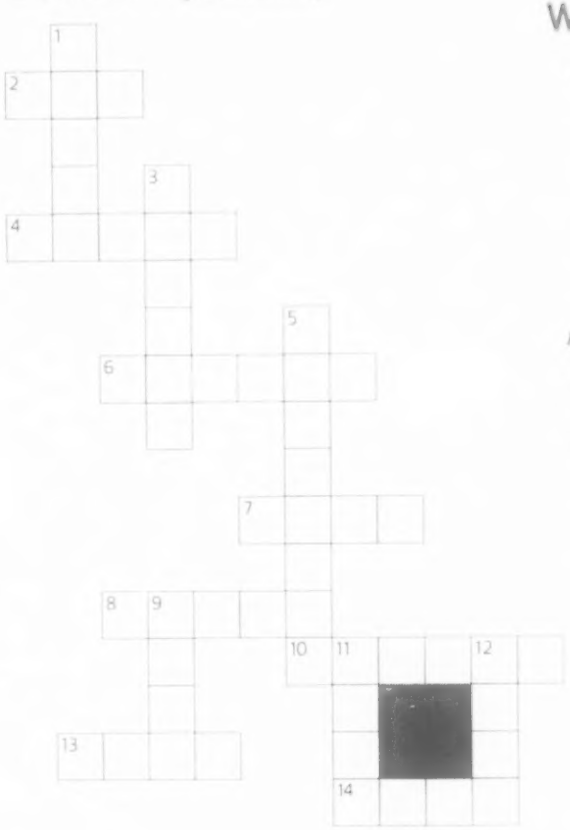
Level A (easier)

Across clues

2. Driver: "I have a flat tire. Can you ____ it?" Repairman: I'm sorry but it can't be repaired. You'll have to replace it."
4. "My car won't _____. What do you think is the problem?" "Maybe it's just out of gas."
6. There was too much rain recently in the South of the U.S. Many towns had a lot of flood damage. It will cost a lot of money to _____ the homes.
7. My friend knows how to fix _____ . He wants to get a good job in auto maintenance, but I think he has to go to technical school first.
8. Student A: "I'll call you tomorrow." Student B: "You can't. My _____ isn't working. They are coming to repair it on Friday."
10. Student: "Sorry I'm late for class. There was construction on the road so I had to drive _____." Teacher: "Oh, I didn't know they were fixing that road."
13. Teacher: "This tape recorder doesn't _____." Student: "Look—you didn't plug it in." Teacher: "Thanks! Now it works."
14. Doctor: "I looked at the X-ray of your son's leg, and the bone is not broken." Mom: "That's _____ news!"

Down clues

1. "This shoe has a hole in it." "You can take it to the shoe repair shop at the mall. I'm sure they can _____ _____."
3. "My watch is _____. Do you think I can get it fixed?" "I don't think so. You'll probably have to buy a new one."
5. Teacher: "Your story is very interesting." Student: "Did I make any grammar _____?" Teacher: "Yes, I marked some places with a red pen." Student: "OK, I will try to correct them."
9. I can't _____ the radio. Can you please turn up the volume?
11. "Do you like those pants?" "Yes, but they're too _____ for me." "Don't worry, you can hem them up."
12. That music is too _____! Please turn down the volume!



Word list

broken
cars
fix
fix it
good
hear
long
loud
mistakes
phone
repair
slowly
start
work

Note to the instructor:

Here is a multi-level puzzle on the topic of fixing and repairing things. To introduce this topic to your students, you could brainstorm a list of things that need fixing (a shoe, a refrigerator, a lamp, or whatever the students come up with) and talk about how each of those things could be repaired, who to call, etc.

Same clues, different puzzle!

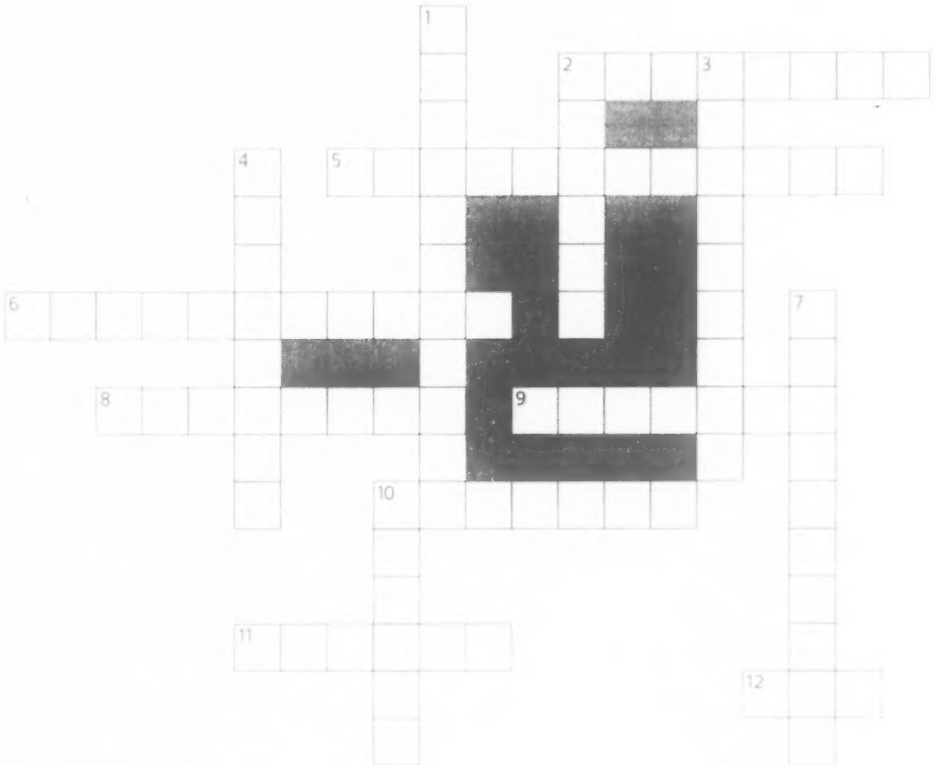
We've written two separate puzzles for Levels A and B, but if you look carefully you will see that they use the exact same examples. The easier level just requires a passive understanding of the vocabulary, and the harder level requires an active use of it.

This means that your students can use Level A to warm up or prepare for Level B—they will find the clues are the same although the second puzzle is more challenging.

For follow-up, you can use the dialog situations in these clues for some short role-play activities for oral practice. There are some other suggested follow-up activities on page 10 of this issue.

"Fixing things" crossword, cont'd

Level B (harder)



Word list

construction
correct
damage
get it fixed
hem
isn't working
maintenance
not broken
out of gas
plug it in
replace
repair
turn down
turn up

Across clues

2. That music is too loud! Please _____ _____ the volume.
5. Student: "Sorry I'm late for class. There was _____ on the road so I had to drive slowly." Teacher: "Oh, I didn't know they were fixing that road."
6. Student A: "I'll call you tomorrow." Student B: "You can't. My phone _____ _____. They are coming to repair it on Friday."
8. Teacher: "This tape recorder doesn't work." Student: "Look—you didn't _____ _____." Teacher: "Thanks! Now it works."
9. Teacher: "Your story is very interesting." Student: "Did I make any grammar mistakes?" Teacher: "Yes, I marked some places with a red pen." Student: "OK, I will try to _____ them."
10. Driver: "I have a flat tire. Can you fix it?" Repairman: "I'm sorry but it can't be repaired. You'll have to _____ it."
11. There was too much rain recently in the South of the U.S. Many towns had a lot of flood _____. It will cost a lot of money to repair the homes.
12. "Do you like those pants?" "Yes, but they're too long for me." "Don't worry, you can ____ them up."

Down clues

1. My friend knows how to fix cars. He wants to get a good job in auto _____, but I think he has to go to technical school first.
2. I can't hear the radio. Can you please _____ _____ the volume?
3. Doctor: "I looked at the X-ray of your son's leg, and the bone is _____ _____." Mom: "That's good news!"
4. "My car won't start. What do you think is the problem?" "Maybe it's just _____ _____."
7. "My watch is broken. Do you think I can _____?" "I don't think so. You'll probably have to buy a new one."
10. "This shoe has a hole in it." "You can take it to the shoe ____ shop at the mall. I'm sure they can fix it."

"Fixing things" crossword puzzle, cont'd

Follow-up activities

Writing for advice—Have students draw names and address a letter to another student asking for advice on how to fix something. Tell the students the problem doesn't have to be true. They can invent something or select from one of the examples in the puzzle or from the warm-up discussion if they wish. When the students have finished writing, have them deliver the letters and then write a response to the letter they receive. (If this exchange is interesting enough they may want to continue with another round of exchanges.)

Speaking activities—Chances are good your students will need to use the vocabulary they've been learning in the written exercises, so it would be good to follow up with some oral work. Here are some suggestions:

1. True stories. Ask students to relate how something got fixed. For example, landlord came to replace light, brother-in-law changed a tire, etc. They can do this in small groups, but this one might be more interesting when shared with the whole class.

2. Personal stories. Ask students to explain what *they* know how to fix. The best way to do this, if you have a large enough class, is to have them work in groups of 3 or 4 and come up with a group list of the things they can repair. This way, even beginning level students can contribute their expertise.

3. Problem-solving discussion. It's great if students want to talk about what they can do but if they are at all hesitant to "brag," here's an approach that might work: Set up a fictional character (perhaps a new arrival to this country?) who needs a lot of help and ask students to suggest what help they each can offer. "I can teach him to drive," for example. This could lead to further discussion of how they acquired their own skills.

Why it works

All adults have some sort of expertise. It is good to find ways to bring that in to the classroom. It helps to offset the feeling of ignorance people get who are trying to learn a new language. And for the teacher, the more you know about your students the better you can plan appropriate lessons.

Vocabulary matching exercise

Here's an easy way for students to review the vocabulary from the "Fixing things" activity. If possible, enlarge the cards below first to make them easier to handle. Then make enough copies to give one set to each pair of students.

Have the students mix the cards and place them upside down to play a "Concentration"-style matching game. The object is to find two cards in which the problem and the solution match. If they do find a match, the students should give an example, ie., "This dress is too long. I'm going to hem it up."

Note: This game will seem too difficult unless the students are already familiar with the vocabulary. For beginning students, you can make the game easier by printing the "problem" set on a different color of paper.

Problem	Solution
it's too long	hem it up
it's not loud enough	turn it up
it's too loud	turn it down
it's out of gas	fill it up
it can't be fixed	replace it
it's broken	repair it
it's damaged	get it fixed
there's a mistake	correct it

Tools & techniques:

All the newsprint that's fit to use!

—*by* ***Fiona Armstrong****, ESL teacher in New York City.*

Here's how to get your hands on what may be the world's most useful ESL teaching tool—Buy a large pad of newsprint. A local art store probably has it on sale, and you will find it has a thousand uses in the in the ESL classroom. If you use newsprint to record what happened in class, you can refer back to these sheets for recycling, expanding, reviewing and assessing your lessons.

Use for activity guides

Class-generated interview questions can be listed on newsprint and referred to during the student-to-student interviews. For example: questions to ask about someone's mother on Mother's Day, questions to ask about children, with a parallel sheet for an only child (using singular forms of verbs); questions about a classmate's country or about their job. These need only be displayed as long as needed, yet they can always be retrieved for someone who needs a review, for a new student, for an absentee. Following an interview the students can write what they learned on smaller sheets of newsprint and then move them around in a group collaboration, as they compose the story.

Use as a memory helper

The words of a song or Jazz Chant can be captured as the class listens to it, then referred to when practicing. What works especially well with new ESL learners are icons or pictograms drawn to represent the events of a story told by the teacher or a student and then used as a mnemonic device for recalling each statement in English (as developed and presented by Norma Shapiro and Carol Genser in their book **ChalkTalks***). It is remarkable to see how even very beginning students will immediately remember and repeat the events months after studying it when shown the picture sheet.

When using any picture series, the students can dictate or write their version on newsprint. They can also do this for a group or class description of a class trip, of a classmate's experience, advice from the class on what to do in a situation, etc. At the end of a course, individuals or groups can be given a sheet of newsprint to create a student test, or pairs can sit and review together, a newer student can be introduced by a classmate to something they missed.

Picture presentations

Sheets of newsprint can be given to groups together with old catalogs, magazines, newspapers, etc., and glue to search for, discuss, cut out, glue and label a variety of collages, such as different kinds of clothing, room furnishings, meals, a picture alphabet, a word alphabet from print, a season, a garden, an ideal home. Students can use the paper to draw scenes from their countries, a floorplan of their homes, maps of their countries, schools, or neighborhoods.

Lists and checklists

With more advanced students, they can begin to collect idioms as they occur and place a drawing or definition on an ongoing list. Later you can test and review the idioms from the newsprint sheets. A weekly spelling or vocabulary list can be collected by the class. Grammatical elements can be recorded on newsprint as they occur in class, for example expressions like: interested in, embarrassed by, tired of. All can be color coded for visual impact and referred to when needed.

Instructions, and more

Outlines for written assignments, tips on reading to their children or helping their children with homework all help the students organize their school and home lives. Groups can generate class rules, they can nominate candidates for class office and make up campaign posters. Others can be assigned a system of the body to draw on newsprint and then to list related symptoms, diseases and treatments associated with each system, and how to keep it healthy. When a group presents their report they use their sheets and they can even visit other classes with them to present. Individuals can make posters of their hobbies or job skills (a visual resume?).

The uses for newsprint are endless. The sheets can be placed on the board with magnets and easily moved around for composing or concentration games. To store them they can be rolled, tied and labeled and placed in a small area or folded in files. For teachers with inadequate chalkboards and bulletin boards they are a lifesaver. I urge you to go out and get several pads of newsprint in different sizes, and avail yourself of this wonderful resource.

* ***ChalkTalks*** *by Norma Shapiro and Carol Genser (ISBN 0-929724-15-1) is available for $19.95 from the following Alta Book Center, 1-800-ALTA/ESL and Delta Systems Co., Inc. 1-800-323-8270*

Using film media:
The Red Balloon

The Red Balloon is a wonderful French film made in 1956 and produced by Nelson Entertainment, Inc. I came across it one year while looking for a video to use as a springboard exercise for my college level writing class. I have found that children's videos in general are very versatile for ESL use.

Many of you are probably already familiar with this film; still I would like to share how I have used it in different levels for various skill areas.

The story is about a lonely French boy named Pascal who befriends a wondrous red balloon that follows him everywhere and even hovers outside his window at home. The Red Balloon is a childhood fantasy, an allegory, about the magical powers of the universal themes of love and friendship.

The film has several unique characteristics that make it versatile and adaptable for ESL use and flexible in application to various levels of instruction.

1. The film is 34 minutes long.
2. It has limited dialogue.
3. The music is well selected and carries the story line.
4. There are only two main characters.
5. It has excellent interaction with various characters in the community.
6. The action is well paced.
7. The open ending is full of possibilities.

Here is a partial list of what you can do with this film at various levels:

Level A—Intermediate

Grammar:

1. Have the students identify action verbs.
2. Make lists of parts of speech that you want to emphasize—nouns, adjectives.
3. Practice writing questions and answers about the story.

Conversation:

1. Use the film for vocabulary review, either before or after viewing it, for example about community, jobs, etc.
2. Talk about the story, "What Happened?" This can be done during the film or afterwards.
3. Use the ending as an exercise in predicting.

Writing:

1. Write a brief summary of the story, using simple and compound sentences.
2. Write about a favorite toy.

Level B—Advanced Intermediate

Grammar:

1. Write a summary using a specific verb tense.

Conversation:

1. Have discussion groups on why people acted the way they did toward the boy.
2. Have students share personal childhood experiences.
3. Have students create dialogue for a segment, can be assigned to groups, then share in front of the class.

Writing:

1. Write an "ending" to the story.
2. Write a detailed description of one minor character.
3. Write a descriptive paragraph of the setting including spatial and sensory description.

Level C, Advanced

Advanced lecture and note taking:

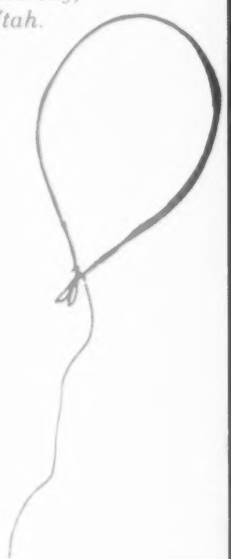
1. Have students discuss the relationships of characters and speculate to causes, personal and societal.
2. Have students critique the film on its artistic appeal and discuss the various techniques used to create the desired effect.
3. Have students research and report to class various aspects of child development, i.e., imaginary playmates, etc.

Writing:

1. Assign an essay discussing childhood in their culture.
2. Have the students rewrite the ending of the film.
3. Assign a writing on their favorite character and have support their opinion with details.
4. Assign a short summary paragraph to be written in the active voice and then rewrite it in the passive voice.
5. Write a narrative summary of the story.

The Red Balloon can provide a fresh approach to engage your students in an otherwise routine assignment. Undoubtedly you will develop your own applications to suit your particular students!

*—by **Mary Quiroz Whisler**, ESL Instructor, Weber State University, Ogden, Utah.*



Idea file:

Make a categories word game

Here's a word-game activity you can try now, or save for sometime when a short activity is needed. This game is student-produced, so it doesn't require much preparation before class. It's easy to recycle, so you can use it again and again, choosing different categories to suit your students.

First, you see below an example of a completed game. There is a mish-mash of 21 words, each of which fits into one of three categories. Have your students write each word under the category where it best fits. Then they will be ready to prepare their own word list for someone else to solve.

Put each of these words into the right category:

here, running, home, now, dream, look, my house, yesterday, go, three o'clock, too late, the library, all night, sleeping, all day, put something down, somewhere, there, one month, 313 Main Street, think about something.

Time	Place	Action

How to do it

When the students are finished trying the above exercise, have them divide into small groups to create a new word game. If you like, you can use the same three categories—time, place, action—for their first one.

Ask the groups of students to brainstorm as many words (or phrases) as they can for each category. They can write these on scrap paper. Then, have them select, by circling, seven to ten of their words for each category and write them on a fresh sheet of paper, mixed together. (Alternatively, they can write these on cards.)

When all the groups are finished writing, they exchange papers with another group and then try to do the other group's exercise correctly. They can check their answers with the group that authored the exercise.

Here are some **general categories** you can try for other versions of this game:

Animal, Vegetable, Mineral
Land, Sea, Air
Family, Work, School
Food, Health, Travel
Sound, Sight, Smell

For more **specific categories**, you can borrow from material the students have been studying. For example:

Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives
Past, Present, Future
Police, Fire Department, Bank
Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years

Other ideas:

- If your students know each other well, choose three students' names for the categories.
- For advanced students, choose the names of three characters from a story they've read.
- Choose the names of three public figures from the news (make sure all the students know about them).
- Choose the names of three countries in the news. Let students browse through newspapers to find words or phrases that apply.

When to use it

This activity is adaptable to any level, can be used with multi-level groups, and can be used as a vocabulary review or even as a warm-up exercise for new material you will be introducing.

539

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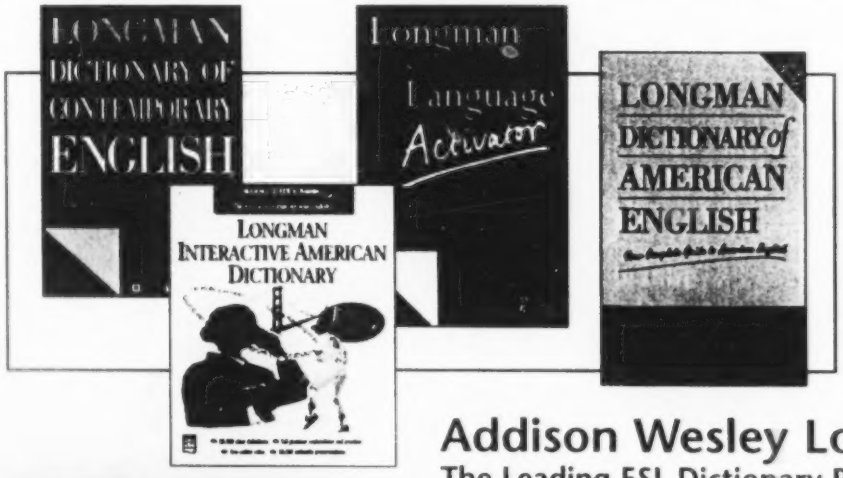
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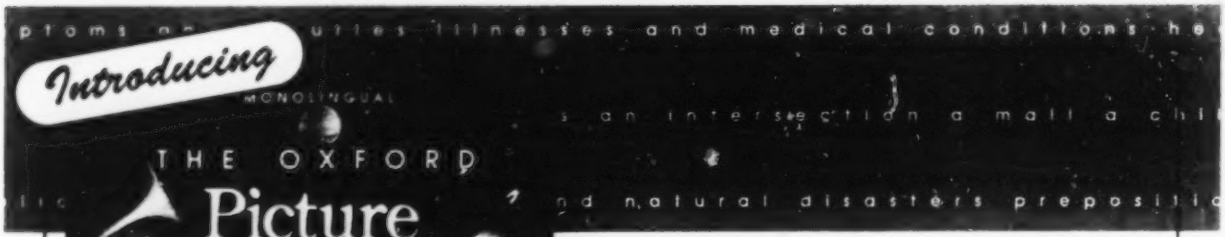

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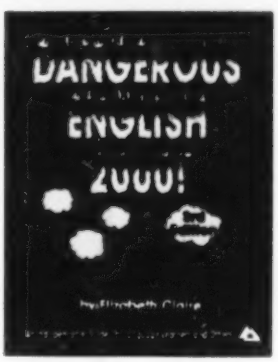

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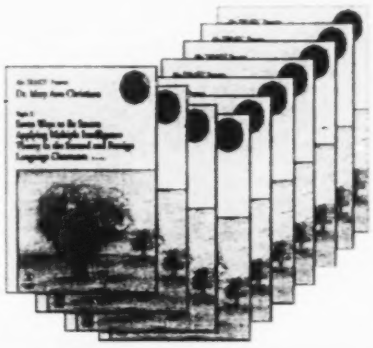

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